Journey to the West

Wu Cheng-en

Journey to the West

Wu Cheng – en

Journey to the West

Table of Contents

Journey to the West

Wu Cheng – en

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

Chapter 9

Chapter 10

Chapter 11

Chapter 12.....

Chapter 13.....

Chapter 14.....

Chapter 15.....

Chapter 16.....

Chapter 17.....

Chapter 18.....

Chapter 19.....

Chapter 20.....

Chapter 21.....

Chapter 22.....

Chapter 23.....

Chapter 24.....

Chapter 25.....

Chapter 26.....

Chapter 27.....

Chapter 28

Chapter 29

Chapter 30

Chapter 31

Chapter 32

Chapter 33

Chapter 34

Chapter 35

Chapter 36

Chapter 37

Chapter 38

Chapter 39

Chapter 40

Chapter 41

Chapter 42

Chapter 43

Chapter 44.....

Chapter 45.....

Chapter 46.....

Table of Contents

Journey to the West

Chapter 47.....

Chapter 48.....

Chapter 49.....

Chapter 50.....

Chapter 51.....

Chapter 52.....

Chapter 53.....

Chapter 54.....

Chapter 55.....

Chapter 56.....

Chapter 57

Chapter 58

Chapter 59

Chapter 60

Chapter 61

Chapter 62

Chapter 63

Chapter 64

Chapter 65

Chapter 66

Chapter 67

Chapter 68

Chapter 69

Chapter 70

Chapter 71

Chapter 72

Chapter 73.....

Chapter 74.....

Chapter 75.....

Chapter 76.....

Chapter 77.....

Chapter 78.....

Chapter 79.....

Chapter 80.....

Chapter 81.....

Chapter 82.....

Chapter 83.....

Chapter 84.....

Chapter 85.....

Chapter 86.....

Chapter 87.....

Chapter 88.....

Chapter 89.....

Chapter 90.....

Chapter 91.....

Chapter 92.....

Chapter 93.....

Table of Contents

Journey to the West

Chapter 94.....

Chapter 95.....

Chapter 96.....

Chapter 97.....

Chapter 98.....

Chapter 99.....

Chapter 100.....

Wu Cheng – en

This page formatted 2005 Blackmask Online.

http://www.blackmask.com

Adapted from the WJF Jenner translation (Beijing, 1955) by Collinson Fair.

Copyright 2005, Silk Pagoda.

Chapter 1

•

Chapter 2

•

Chapter 3

•

Chapter 4

•

Chapter 5

•

Chapter 6

•

Chapter 7

•

Chapter 8

•

Chapter 9

•

Chapter 10

- Chapter 11
- Chapter 12
- Chapter 13
- Chapter 14
- Chapter 15
- Chapter 16
- Chapter 17
- Chapter 18
- Chapter 19
- Chapter 20
- Chapter 21
- Chapter 22

- Chapter 23
- Chapter 24
- Chapter 25
- Chapter 26
- Chapter 27
- Chapter 28
- Chapter 29
- Chapter 30
- Chapter 31
- Chapter 32
- Chapter 33
- Chapter 34

•

Chapter 35

•

Chapter 36

•

Chapter 37

•

Chapter 38

•

Journey to the West

1

Journey to the West

Chapter 39

•

Chapter 40

•

Chapter 41

•

Chapter 42

•

Chapter 43

•

Chapter 44

•

Chapter 45

•

Chapter 46

•

Chapter 47

•

Chapter 48

•

Chapter 49

•

Chapter 50

•

Chapter 51

•

Chapter 52

•

Chapter 53

•

Chapter 54

•

Chapter 55

•

Chapter 56

•

Chapter 57

•

Chapter 58

•

Chapter 59

•

Chapter 60

•

Chapter 61

•

Chapter 62

•

Chapter 63

•

Chapter 64

•

Chapter 65

•

Chapter 66

•

Chapter 67

•

Chapter 68

•

Chapter 69

•

Chapter 70

•

Chapter 71

•

Chapter 72

•

Chapter 73

•

Chapter 74

•

Chapter 75

•

Chapter 76

•

Chapter 77

•

Chapter 78

•

Chapter 79

•

Chapter 80

•

Chapter 81

•

Chapter 82

•

Chapter 83

•

Chapter 84

•

Chapter 85

•

Chapter 86

•

Chapter 87

•

Chapter 88

•

Chapter 89

•

Journey to the West

2

Journey to the West

Chapter 90

•

Chapter 91

- Chapter 92
- Chapter 93
- Chapter 94
- Chapter 95
- Chapter 96
- Chapter 97
- Chapter 98
- Chapter 99
- Chapter 100

Chapter 1

The Divine Root Conceives and the Spring Breaks Forth

As the Heart's Nature Is Cultivated, the Great Way Arises

Before Chaos was divided, Heaven and Earth were one;

All was a shapeless blur, and no men had appeared.

Once Pan Gu destroyed the Enormous Vagueness

The separation of clear and impure began.

Living things have always tended towards humanity;

From their creation all beings improve.

If you want to know about Creation and Time,

Read Difficulties Resolved on the Journey to the West.

In the arithmetic of the universe, 129,600 years make one cycle. Each cycle can be divided into twelve phases: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI and XII, the twelve branches. Each phase lasts 10,800 years.

Now within a single day, the positive begins at the time I; at II the cock crows; at III it is not quite light; at IV

the sun rises; V is after breakfast; and at VI one does business. VII is when the sun reaches noon; at VIII it is slipping towards the West; IX is late afternoon; the sun sets at X; XI is dusk; and at XII people settle down for the night.

If you compare this with the big numbers, then at the end of Phase XI Heaven and Earth were still one, and no beings had appeared. 5,400 years later came the beginning of Phase XII, when all was darkness and there were still no people or other creatures; for this reason it was called Chaos. Another 5,400 years later Phase XII was drawing to a close and a new cycle was about to begin. As Phase I of the new era approached, gradually Chapter 1

there was light. As Shao Yong said,

"When winter reaches the mid – point of Phase I

The heart of Heaven does not move.

Where the Positive first appears

Nothing has yet come to life."

At this time, Heaven first had a foundation. 5,400 years later, in the

middle of Phase I, the light and pure rose upwards, and sun, moon, stars, and constellations were created. These were called the Four Images. Hence the saying that heaven began in I.

Another 5,400 years later, when Phase I was nearing its end and Phase II was imminent, things gradually solidified. As the *Book of Changes* says, "Great is the Positive; far—reaching is the Negative! All things are endowed and born in accordance with Heaven." This was when the earth began to congeal. After 5,400 more years came the height of Phase II, when the heavy and impure solidified, and water, fire, mountains, stone, and Earth came into being. These five were called the Five Movers. Therefore it is said that the Earth was created in Phase II.

After a further 5,400 years, at the end of Phase II and the beginning of the Phase III, living beings were created. In the words of the *Book of the Calendar, "* The essence of the sky came down and the essence of earth went up. Heaven and Earth intermingled, and all creatures were born." Then Heaven was bright and Earth was fresh, and the Positive intermingled with the Negative. 5,400 years later, when Phase III was at its height, men, birds and beasts were created. Thus the Three Powers——Heaven, Earth and Man——now had their set places. Therefore it is said that man was created in Phase III.

Moved by Pan Gu's creation, the Three Emperors put the world in order and the Five Rulers laid down the moral code. The world was then divided into four great continents: The Eastern Continent of Superior Body, the Western Continent of Cattle—gift, the Southern Continent of Jambu and the Northern Continent of Kuru.

This book deals only with the Eastern Continent of Superior Body. Beyond the seas there is a country called Aolai. This country is next to an ocean, and in the middle of the ocean is a famous island called the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. This mountain is the ancestral artery of the Ten Continents, the origin of the Three Islands; it was formed when the clear and impure were separated and the Enormous Vagueness was divided. It is a really splendid mountain and there are some verses to prove it: It stills the ocean with its might,

It awes the jade sea into calm.

It stills the ocean with its might:

Tides wash its silver slopes and fish swim into its caves.

Chapter 1

Journey to the West

It awes the jade sea into calm:

Amid the snowy breakers the sea – serpent rises from the deep.

It rises high in the corner of the world where Fire and Wood meet; Its summit towers above the Eastern Sea.

Red cliffs and strange rocks;

Beetling crags and jagged peaks.

On the red cliffs phoenixes sing in pairs;

Lone unicorns lie before the beetling crags.

The cry of pheasants is heard upon the peaks;

In caves the dragons come and go.

There are deer of long life and magic foxes in the woods;

Miraculous birds and black cranes in the trees.

There are flowers of jade and strange plants that wither not;

Green pine and bluish cypress ever in leaf,

Magic peaches always in fruit.

Clouds gather round the tall bamboo.

The wisteria grows thick around the mountain brook

And the banks around are newly – coloured with flowers.

It is the Heaven – supporting pillar where all the rivers meet,

The Earth's root, unchanged through a myriad aeons.

There was once a magic stone on the top of this mountain which was thirty – six feet five inches high and twenty – four feet round. It was thirty – six feet five inches high to correspond with the 365 degrees of the heavens, and twenty – four feet round to match the twenty – four divisions of the solar calendar. On top of it were nine apertures and

eight holes, for the Nine Palaces and the Eight Trigrams. There were no trees around it to give shade, but magic fungus and orchids clung to its sides. Ever since Creation began it had been Chapter 1

receiving the truth of Heaven, the beauty of Earth, the essence of the Sun and the splendour of the Moon; and as it had been influenced by them for so long it had miraculous powers. It developed a magic womb, which burst open one day to produce a stone egg about the size of a ball.

When the wind blew on this egg it turned into a stone monkey, complete with the five senses and four limbs.

When the stone monkey had learned to crawl and walk, he bowed to each of the four quarters. As his eyes moved, two beams of golden light shot towards the Pole Star palace and startled the Supreme Heavenly Sage, the Greatly Compassionate Jade Emperor of the Azure Vault of Heaven, who was sitting surrounded by his immortal ministers on his throne in the Hall of Miraculous Mist in the Golden – gated Cloud Palace. When he saw the dazzling golden light he ordered Thousand – mile Eye and Wind – accompanying Ear to open the Southern Gate of Heaven and take a look. The two officers went out through the gate in obedience to the imperial command, and while one observed what was going on the other listened carefully. Soon afterwards they reported back:

"In obedience to the Imperial Mandate your subjects observed and listened to the source of the golden light.

We found that at the edge of the country of Aolai, which is East of the ocean belonging to the Eastern Continent of Superior Body, there is an island called the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. A magic stone on the top of this mountain produced a magic egg, and when the wind blew on this egg it turned into a stone monkey which bowed to each of the four quarters. When he moved his eyes, golden light shot towards the Pole Star Palace; but now that he is eating and drinking, the golden light is gradually dying."

In his benevolence and mercy the Jade Emperor said, "Creatures down below are born of the essence of heaven and earth: there is nothing remarkable about him."

On his mountain the monkey was soon able to run and jump, feed from plants and trees, drink from brooks and springs, pick mountain flowers and look for fruit. He made friends with the wolves, went around with the tigers and leopards, was on good terms with the deer, and had the other monkeys and apes for relations. At night he slept under the rockfaces, and he roamed around the peaks and caves by day. As the saying so rightly goes, "There is no calendar in the mountains, and when winter's over you don't know the time of year." On hot mornings he and all the other monkeys would play under the shade of some pines to avoid the heat. Just look at them all:

Climbing trees, picking flowers, looking for fruit;

Throwing pellets, playing knucklebones;

Running round sandy hollows, building stone pagodas;

Chasing dragonflies and catching locusts;

Worshipping the sky and visiting Bodhisattvas;

Tearing off creepers and weaving straw hats;

Catching fleas then popping them with their teeth and fingers;
Grooming their coats and sharpening their nails;

Beating, scratching, pushing, squashing, tearing and tugging;

Playing all over the place under the pine trees;

Washing themselves beside the green stream.

After playing, the monkeys would go and bathe in the stream, a mountain torrent that tumbled along like rolling melons. There is an old saying, "Birds have bird language and, animals have animal talk."

All the monkeys said to each other, "I wonder where that water comes from. We've got nothing else to do today, so wouldn't it be fun to go upstream and find its source?" With a shout they all ran off, leading their children and calling to their brothers. They climbed up the mountain beside the stream until they reached its source, where a

waterfall cascaded from a spring. They saw

One white rainbow arching,

A thousand strands of flying snow,

Unbroken by the sea winds,

Still there under the moon.

Cold air divides the greeny crags,

Splashes moisten the mountainside;

A noble waterfall cascades,

Hanging suspended like a curtain.

The monkeys clapped their hands and explained with delight, "What lovely water. It must go all the way to the bottom of the mountain and join the waves of the sea."

Then one monkey made a suggestion: "If anyone is clever enough to go through the fall, find the source, and come out in one piece, let's make him our king." When this challenge had been shouted three times, the stone monkey leapt out from the crowd and answered at the top of his voice, "I'll go, I'll go." Splendid monkey!

Indeed:

Today he will make his name;

Tomorrow his destiny shall triumph.

He is fated to live here;

As a King he will enter the Immortals' palace.

Watch him as he shuts his eyes, crouches, and springs, leaping straight into the waterfall. When he opened his eyes and raised his head to look round, he saw neither water nor waves. A bridge stood in front of

him, as large as life. He stopped, calmed himself, took a closer look, and saw that the bridge was made of iron. The water that rushed under it poured out through a fissure in the rocks, screening the gateway to the bridge. He started walking towards the bridge, and as he looked he made out what seemed to be a house. It was a really good place. He saw:

Emerald moss piled up in heaps of blue,

White clouds like drifting jade,

While the light flickered among wisps of coloured mist.

A quiet house with peaceful windows,

Flowers growing on the smooth bench;

Dragon pearls hanging in niches,

Exotic blooms all around.

Traces of fire beside the stove,

Scraps of food in the vessels by the table.

Adorable stone chairs and beds,

Even better stone plates and bowls.

One or two tall bamboos,

Three or four sprigs of plum blossom,

A few pines that always attract rain,

All just like a real home.

He took a good, long look and then scampered to the middle of the bridge, from where he noticed a stone tablet. On the tablet had been carved in big square letters: HAPPY LAND OF THE MOUNTAIN OF

FLOWERS AND FRUIT, CAVE HEAVEN OF THE WATER CURTAIN. The stone monkey was beside himself with glee. He rushed away, shut his eyes, crouched, and leapt back through the waterfall.

Chapter 1

"We're in luck, we're in luck," he said with a chuckle. All the other monkeys crowded round him asking,

"What's it like in there? How deep is the water?"

"There's no water, none at all," replied the stone monkey. "There's an iron bridge, and on the other side of the bridge there's a house that must have been made by Heaven and Earth."

"How ever could you see a house there?" the other monkeys asked. The stone monkey chuckled again.

"The water here comes under the bridge and through the rocks, and it hides the gateway to the bridge from view. There are flowers and trees by the bridge, and a stone house too. Inside the house are stone rooms, a stone stove, stone bowls, stone plates, stone beds, and even stone benches. In the middle of it all is a tablet which says 'Happy Land of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, Cave Heaven of the Water Curtain'. It's just the place for us to settle down in— —there's room there for thousands. Let's all move in, then we won't have to put up with any more nonsense from heaven. In there

We can hide there from the wind,

And shelter from the rain,

With nothing to fear from frost and snow,

And never a rumble of thunder.

The coloured mists glow bright

And the place smells lucky.

The pine and bamboo will always be beautiful,

And rare flowers blossom every day."

The other monkeys were all so delighted to hear this that they said, "You go first and take us with you."

The stone monkey shut his eyes, crouched, and leapt in again, shouting, "Follow me in, follow me in." The braver monkeys all

jumped through. The more timid ones peered forward, shrank back, rubbed their ears, scratched their cheeks, shouted, and yelled at the top of their voices, before going in, all clinging to each other. After rushing across the bridge they all grabbed plates and snatched bowls, bagged stoves and fought over beds, and moved everything around. Monkeys are born naughty and they could not keep quiet for a single moment until they had worn themselves out moving things around.

The stone monkey sat himself in the main seat and said, "Gentlemen, A man who breaks his word is worthless. Just now you said that if anyone was clever enough to come in here and get out again in one piece, you'd make him king. Well, then. I've come in and gone out, and gone out and come in. I've found you gentlemen a cave heaven where you can sleep in peace and all settle down to live in bliss. Why haven't you made me king?" On hearing this all the monkeys bowed and prostrated themselves, not daring to disobey.

They lined up in groups in order of age and paid their homage as at court, all acclaiming him as the "Great King of a Thousand Years." The stone monkey then took the throne, made the word "stone" taboo, and called himself Handsome Monkey King. There is a poem to prove it that goes: All things are born from the Three positives;

The magic stone was quick with the essence of sun and moon.

An egg was turned into a monkey to complete the Great Way;

He was lent a name so that the elixir would be complete.

Looking inside he perceives nothing because it has no form,

Outside he uses his intelligence to create visible things.

Men have always been like this:

Those who are called kings and sages do just as they wish.

Taking control of his host of monkeys, apes, gibbons and others, the Handsome Monkey King divided them into rulers and subjects, assistants and officers. In the morning they roamed the Mountain of

Flowers and Fruit and in the evening they settled down for the night in the Water Curtain Cave. They made a compact that they would not join the ranks of the birds or go with the running beasts. They had their own king, and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

In spring they picked flowers for food and drink,

In summer they lived off fruit.

In autumn they gathered tares and chestnuts,

They got through the winter on Solomon's—seal.

The Handsome Monkey King's innocent high spirits could not, of course, last three or four hundred years.

One day he suddenly felt depressed during a banquet with his monkey host, and he started to weep. The startled monkeys crowded round, bowed to him and asked, "What's the matter, Your Majesty?"

"Although I'm happy now," the Monkey King replied, "I'm worried about the future. That's what's getting me down."

The other monkeys laughed and said, "Your Majesty is being greedy. We have parties every day; we live in a mountain paradise, in an ancient cave in a divine continent. We are spared the rule of unicorns, the Chapter 1

domination of phoenixes, and the restraints of human kings. We are free to do just as we like——we are infinitely lucky. Why make yourself miserable worrying about the future?"

To this the Monkey King replied, "Yes, we don't have to submit to the laws and regulations of human kings, and we don't live in terror of the power of birds and beasts. But the time will come when we are old and weak, and the underworld is controlled by the King of Hell. When the time comes for us to die, we won't be able to go on living among the Blessed, and our lives will have been in vain." All the monkeys covered their faces and wept as everyone of them thought about death.

Suddenly a gibbon jumped out from their ranks and shrieked in a

piercing voice, "If Your Majesty is thinking so far ahead, this is the beginning of enlightenment. Now of the Five Creatures, there are only three that do not come under the jurisdiction of the King of Hell."

"Do you know which they are?" asked the Monkey King.

"Yes," the ape replied. "They are the Buddhas, the Immortals and the Sages. They are free from the Wheel of Reincarnation. They are not born and they do not die. They are as eternal as Heaven and Earth, as the mountains and the rivers."

"Where do they live?" the Monkey King asked.

"Only in the human world," the ape replied, "in ancient caves on magic mountains." The Monkey King was delighted to hear this.

"I shall leave you all tomorrow," he said, "and go down the mountain. If I have to, I'll roam the corners of the oceans and go to the edge of the sky to find these three kinds of beings and discover the secret of eternal youth that will keep us out of the clutches of the King of Hell for ever." Goodness! Because of these words he was to learn how to be free from the Wheel of Reincarnation and become the Great Sage Equaling Heaven.

All the monkeys clapped with approval and said, "Great! Great! Tomorrow we'll climb all over the mountain and get lots of fruit to give Your Majesty a really big banquet to send you off."

The next day the monkeys set out to pick magic peaches, gather rare fruits, dig out yams, and cut Solomon's – seal. Magic fungus and fragrant orchid were collected, and everything was set on the stone benches and the stone tables, with fairy wine and dishes. You could see Golden pills and pearl pellets,

Bursting red and plump yellow.

The golden pills and pearl pellets were winter cherries, beautiful and sweet; The bursting red and plump yellow were ripe plums, tasty and sharp.

Fresh, sweet – fleshed longans with thin skins.

Fiery lichees with tiny stones in a red sack.

Branch after branch of crab – apples,

Yellow – skinned loquats with their leaves on.

Rabbit – head pears and chicken – heart jujubes

To quench your thirst, remove your cares, and sober you up.

Fragrant peaches and tender apricots,

As sweet and luscious as jade wine.

Crisp plums and arbutus,

As sharp as glistening yogurt.

Ripe melons with red coats and black seeds,

Big, four – sectioned persimmons with yellow skins.

Bursting pomegranates:

Cinnabar pips shining like fire – crystal pearls.

Opened water – chestnuts

With firm round flesh like golden agate.

Walnuts and gingko fruits to eat with tea;

Coconuts and grapes to make into wine.

Dishes loaded with pine cones, yew – nuts, filberts, and crab – apples;
Tangerines, sugar – cane and oranges covering the table.

Hot roast yams,

Tender boiled Solomon's – seal.

Pounded china – root and Job's tears.

Simmered in soup in a stone – pot.

Although we humans have rare delicacies to eat,

We are no happier than those monkeys in the mountains.

Chapter 1

12

Journey to the West

The host of monkeys ushered the Handsome Monkey King to the seat of honour and sat down below him according to age. Each of them took it in turns to bring him wine, flowers, and fruit, and they drank hard for a whole day. The next morning the Handsome Monkey King got up early and ordered, "Children, tear down some old pines and make me a raft. Find a bamboo pole to punt with and load it up with fruit. I'm going." He went aboard the raft all by himself, pushed off with all his might, and floated off towards the waves of the ocean. He intended to sail with the wind and cross over to the Southern Jambu Continent.

The heaven—born monkey, whose conduct was so noble,

Left his island to drift with heaven's winds.

He sailed oceans and seas to find the Way of Immortality,

Deeply determined to do a great deed.

The predestined one should not have vulgar longings;

He can attain the primal truth without care or worry.

He is bound to find a kindred spirit,

To explain the origins and the laws of nature.

He had chosen just the right time for his journey. After he boarded his raft the Southeasterly wind blew hard for days on end and bore him to the Northwestern shore of the Southern Continent. Testing the depth of the water with his pole he found that it was shallow, so he abandoned the raft and jumped ashore. He saw humans by the coast, fishing, hunting geese, gathering clams, and extracting salt. He went up to them, leaping around and making faces, which so scared them that they dropped their baskets and nets and fled in all directions as fast as they could. The Monkey King grabbed one of them who was a poor runner, stripped him of his clothes, and dressed himself in them like a human. He swaggered through the provinces and prefectures,

learning human behavior and human speech in the market places. Whether he was eating his breakfast or going to bed at nigh he was always asking about Buddhas, Immortals and Sages, and seeking the secret of eternal youth.

He observed that the people of the world were too concerned with fame and fortune to be interested in their fates.

When will the struggle for fame and fortune end?

Toiling from morning till night, never pleasing yourself.

Those who ride donkeys long for stallions,

The Prime Minister always wants to be a prince.

They only worry about having to stop work to eat or dress;

They never fear that the King of Hell will come to get them.

When trying to ensure their sons and grandsons inherit their wealth and power, They have no time to stop and think.

Although he asked about the way of the Immortals, the Monkey King was unable to meet one. He spent eight or nine years in the Southern Jambu Continent, going through its great walls and visiting its little counties.

When he found that he had reached the Great Western Ocean he thought that there must be Sages and Immortals on the other side of it, so he made himself another raft like the last one, and floated across the Western Ocean until he came to the Western Continent of Cattle −gift. He went ashore and made extensive and lengthy enquiries until one day he came upon a high and beautiful mountain, thickly forested on its lower slopes. Not fearing wolves, and undaunted by tigers or leopards, he climbed to the summit to see the view. It was indeed a fine mountain:

A thousand peaks brandishing halberds,

Screens ten thousand measures tall.

In the sunlight the mountain haze is lightly touched with blue; After the rain the black rocks look coldly green.

Withered creepers coil round ancient trees,

And the old ford marks the bounds of the mysterious.

Strange flowers and precious plants,

Flourishing in all four seasons, rivaling fairyland.

The nearby cry of a hidden bird,

The clear running of a spring.

Valley upon valley of mushroom and orchid,

Lichen grows all over the cliffs.

The range rises and dips in dragon – like majesty.

Surely there mush be lofty hermits here.

As he was looking at the view the Monkey King heard a human voice coming from the depths of the forest.

He rushed into the trees, and when he cocked his ear to listen he heard a song: Chapter 1

Journey to the West

"Watching the chess game I cut through the rotten,

Felling trees, ding, ding,

Strolling at the edge of the cloud and the mouth of the valley, I sell firewood to buy wine,

Cackling with laughter and perfectly happy.

I pillow myself on a pine root, looking up at the moon.

When I wake up it is light.

Recognizing the old forest

I scale cliffs and cross ridges,

Cutting down withered creepers with my axe.

When I've gathered a basketful

I walk down to the market with a song,

And trade it for three pints of rice.

Nobody else competes with me,

So prices are stable.

I don't speculate or try sharp practice,

Couldn't care less what people think of me,

Calmly lengthening my days.

The people I meet

Are Taoists and Immortals,

Sitting quietly and expounding the Yellow Court."

The Monkey King was overjoyed to hear this, and he said with glee, "So this is where the Immortals have been hiding." He bounded deeper into the woods for a closer look and saw that the singer was a woodcutter cutting firewood. He was wearing the most unusual clothes:

On his head he wore a hat

Woven from the first skin shed by new bamboo shoots.

The clothes on his body

Were made of yam from the wild cotton – tree.

The belt round his waist

Was of silk from an old silkworm.

The straw sandals under his feet

Had straps torn from rotten sago trees.

In his hand he held a steel axe

On his back he carried a hempen rope

At climbing pines and felling dead trees,

Who was a match for this woodcutter?

The Monkey King went closer and called to him. "Old Immortal, your disciple greets you."

The woodcutter dropped his axe in astonishment and turned round to say, "No, no. I don't even have enough to eat or drink, so how can I possibly let you call me an Immortal?"

"If you're not an Immortal," the Monkey King said, "why do you talk like one?"

"I don't talk like an Immortal," the woodcutter said.

"At the edge of the wood just now," the Monkey King replied, "I heard you say, 'The people I meet are Taoists and Immortals, sitting quietly and expounding the *Mantingfang.'* The *Mantingfang* contains the truth about the Way, so if you're not an Immortal, what are you?" The woodcutter laughed.

"It's quite true that the song is called 'The Fragrance of the *Mantingfang,'* and an Immortal who lives near my hut taught me it. He said he saw how hard I had to work and how I was always worried, so he made me sing this song when things were getting me down. It lightens my cares and makes me forget my weariness. I was singing it just now because I had some problems on my mind, and I never imagined that you would be listening."

"If you've got an Immortal for a neighbour, you ought to learn from him how to cultivate your conduct and get him to teach you a recipe for eternal youth."

"I've had a hard life," the woodcutter replied. "My mother and father brought me up till I was about eight, and just when I was beginning to know about life my father died. My mother remained a widow, and I had no brothers or sisters. As I was the only child I had to look after my mother morning and night. Now she is old that I can't possibly leave her. Our land is so overgrown that I can't grow enough to feed and clothe both of us, so I have to cut a couple of bundles of firewood to sell in the market for a handful of coppers to buy the few pints of rice that I cook for myself and for my mother. That's why I can't cultivate my conduct."

"From what you say," the Monkey King replied, "you're a filial son and a gentleman——you're bound to be rewarded for it one day. But I'd be grateful if you could show me where that Immortal lives, so that I can go and pay him my respects."

The woodcutter said, "It's not far from here. This mountain is the Spirit Tower Heart Mountain, and in it there is the Cave of the Setting Moon and the Three Stars. In that cave lives an Immortal called the Patriarch Subhuti. I don't know how many disciples he has trained——there are thirty or forty of them cultivating their conduct with him at the moment. If you take that path South for two or three miles you'll reach his home."

The Monkey King tugged at the woodcutter and said, "Take me there, Elder Brother. If I get anything out of this, I won't forget your kindness."

"You idiot," the woodcutter replied, "didn't you understand what I told you just now? If I went with you I wouldn't be able to earn my living, and who would look after my poor old mother then? I've got to get on with my woodcutting. Go by yourself."

After hearing this the Monkey King had to take his leave. He came out of the forest and found the path, which led up a mountain slope for two or three miles, when he saw the cave. He pulled himself up to his full height to take a look, and it was a really magnificent place:

Misty clouds scattered colours,

Sun and moon shimmered bright.

A thousand ancient cypresses,

Ten thousand lofty bamboos.

A thousand ancient cypresses,

A soft green drawing the rain from the sky.

Ten thousand lofty bamboos,

And a misty valley is azure blue.

Outside the gate rare flowers spread brocade;

Beside the bridge wafts the scent of jade flowers.

Rocky crags jut, glossy with green moss;

On overhanging cliffs blue lichen grows.

Sometimes the call of the crane is heard

And often you see the phoenix soar.

The call of the crane

Echoes beyond the Ninth Heaven and the Milky Way.

When the phoenix soars,

The brilliance of its wings colours the clouds.

Black apes and white deer can be just made out;

Golden lions and jade elephants prefer to keep hidden.

If you look closely at this happy land,

You will see that it rivals paradise.

He saw that the doors of the cave were shut fast, and that everything was still, with no signs of any people. He turned round and noticed that there was a stone tablet about thirty feet high and eight feet wide at the top of the cliff. On it was carved in enormous letters: SPIRIT

—TOWER HEART MOUNTAIN, CAVE OF THE

SETTING MOON AND THE THREE STARS. The Monkey King exclaimed with delight, "The people here really are honest. The mountain and the cave do exist." He took a good long look, but did not dare to knock on the door. He climbed to the and of a pine branch and ate some pine seeds to amuse himself.

Before long the doors of the cave opened with a creak, and an immortal boy came out. In the nobility of his bearing and the exceptional purity of his features he was completely different from an ordinary boy.

His hair was bound with a pair of silken bands,

His flowing gown had two capacious sleeves.

His face and body were naturally distinguished;

His mind and appearance were both empty.

For many years a guest beyond the world of things,

An eternal child amid the mountains,

Untouched by any speck of dust,

He let the years go tumbling by.

When this boy had come out he shouted, "Who's making that row out here?"

The Monkey King scampered down the tree, went up to him, and said with a bow, "Immortal child, I am a disciple who has come to ask about the Way and study under the Immortal. The last thing I'd do would be to make a row here?" The boy laughed.

"So you've come to ask about the Way, have you?"

"Yes," the Monkey King replied.

"Our master has just got up," the boy said, "and has now mounted the dais to expound the Way. Before he had started to explain about origins he told me to open the door. He said, 'There is someone outside who wants to cultivate his conduct. Go and welcome him.' I suppose he must have meant you."

"Yes, he meant me," the Monkey King said with a smile.

"Come with me," the boy said.

The Monkey King straightened his clothes and followed the boy deep into the depths of the cave. He saw majestic pavilions and towers of red jade, pearl palaces and gateways of cowry, and countless rooms of silence and secluded cells leading all the way to a jasper dais. He saw the Patriarch Subhuti sitting on the dais and thirty – six minor Immortals standing below it.

A golden Immortal of great enlightenment, free from filth,

Subhuti, the marvel of the Western World.

Neither dying nor born, he practices the triple meditation,

His spirit and soul entirely benevolent.

In empty detachment he follows the changes;

Having found his true nature he lets it run free.

As eternal as Heaven, and majestic in body,

The great teacher of the Law is enlightened through aeons.

As soon as the Handsome Monkey King saw him he bowed low and knocked his head on the ground before him many times, saying, "Master, master, your disciple pays his deepest respects."

"Where are you from?" the Patriarch asked. "You must tell me your name and address before you can become my pupil."

"I come from the Water Curtain Cave in the Flowers and Fruit

Mountain in the land of Aolai in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body," replied the Monkey King.

"Throw him out," the Patriarch roared. "He's a liar and a cheat, and even if he tried cultivating his conduct he would get nowhere."

The Monkey King desperately kept hitting his head on the ground and said, "Your disciple spoke the truth. I promise I wasn't lying."

The Patriarch asked, "If you were speaking the truth, why did you say that you came from the Eastern Continent of Superior Body? Between here and the Eastern Continent there are two seas and the Southern Jambu Continent, so how could you possibly have come here from there?"

The Monkey King, still kowtowing, replied, "I sailed across seas and oceans, crossed frontiers and wandered through many countries for over ten years before I arrived here."

"So you came here by stages," the Patriarch remarked. "What is your surname?"

"I'm not surly," the Monkey King replied. "If people call me names it doesn't bother me, and if they hit me I don't get angry. I'm just polite to them and that's that. I've never been surly."

"I didn't ask if you were surly. I wanted to know the surname you inherited from your parents."

"I didn't have any parents," the Monkey King replied.

"If you had no parents, did you grow on a tree?"

"I grew not on a tree but in a stone," the Monkey King replied. "All I remember is that there was a magic stone on the top of the Flower and Fruit Mountain, and that one year the stone split open and I was born."

Concealing his delight at searing this, the Patriarch remarked, "In other words, you were born of Heaven and Earth. Walk around for a moment and let me have a look at you." The Monkey King leapt to his feet and shambled round a couple of times.

The Patriarch smiled and said, "Though you have rather a base sort of body, you look like one of the rhesus monkeys that eat pine seeds, and I ought to give you a surname that fits your appearance and call you

Hu ('Macaque'). The elements that make up the character Hu are 'animal,' 'old' and 'moon'. What is old is ancient, and the moon embodies the Negative principle, and what is ancient and Negative cannot be transformed. But I think I would do much better to call you Sun ('Monkey'). Apart from the 'animal' element, the character Sun has one part implying male and one part suggesting a baby, which fits in with my basic theories about children. Your surname will be Sun."

When the Monkey King heard this he kowtowed with delight and said, "Great! Great! Now I have a surname.

I am eternally grateful to you for your mercy and compassion, master. I beg you to give me a personal name to go with my new surname, then it will be much easier to address me."

"There are twelve words within my sect," said the Patriarch, "which I give as names. You belong to the tenth generation of my disciples."

"What are these twelve words?" asked the Monkey King.

"Broad, great, wisdom, intelligence, true, likeness, nature, sea, bright, awakened, complete and enlightenment.

If we work out the generations of disciples, then you should have a name with Wu ('Awakened') in it. So we can give you the Dharma −name Sun Wukong, which means 'Monkey Awakened to Emptiness'. Will that do?"

"Marvellous, marvellous," said the smiling Monkey King. "From now on my name will be Sun Wukong."

Indeed:

When the Great Vagueness was separated there were no surnames; To smash foolish emptiness he had to be awakened to emptiness.

If you want to know what success he had in cultivating his conduct, you must listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 2

He Becomes Aware of the Wonderful Truth of Enlightenment

By Killing the Demon He Realizes His Spirit—Nature

The story goes on to tell how after being given a name the Handsome Monkey King jumped for joy and bowed to Subhuti to express his thanks. The Patriarch then ordered the others to take Sun Wukong out through the double doors and teach him how to sprinkle and sweep the floor, answer orders, and deport himself properly. All the Immortals went out in obedience to this command. When Sun Wukong was outside the doors he bowed to all his spiritual elder brothers and laid out his bed on the verandah. The next morning and every following day he studied language and deportment under his spiritual elder brothers, expounded the scriptures, discussed the Way, practiced calligraphy, and burnt incense. When he had any spare time he would sweep the grounds, dig the vegetable patch, grow flowers, tend trees, look for kindling, light the fire, carry water, and fetch soy. Everything he needed was provided. Thus six or seven years slipped by in the cave without his noticing them. One day the Patriarch took his seat on the dais, called all the Immortals together, and began to explain the Great Way.

Heavenly flowers fell in profusion,

While golden lotuses burst forth from the earth.

Brilliantly he expounded the doctrine of the Three Vehicles,

Setting forth ten thousand Dharmas in all their details.

As he slowly waved his whisk, jewels fell from his mouth,

Echoing like thunder and shaking the Nine Heavens.

Now preaching the Way,

Now teaching meditation,

He showed that the Three Beliefs are basically the same.

In explaining a single word he brought one back to the truth,

And taught the secrets of avoiding birth and understanding one's nature.

As Monkey sat at the side listening to the exposition he was so delighted that he tugged at his ear, scratched his cheek and smiled. He could not help waving his hands and stamping. When the Patriarch noticed this he said to Monkey, "Why are you leaping around like a madman in class instead of listening to the lesson?"

"Your disciple is listening to the exposition with all his attention," Monkey replied, "but your marvellous words made me so happy that I started jumping around without realizing what I was doing. Please forgive me."

To this the Patriarch replied, "If you really understand my marvellous words, then answer this question. How long have you been in my cave?"

"You disciple was born stupid," Monkey replied, "so I've no idea how long I've been here. All I know is that whenever the fire in the stove goes out I go to the other side of the mountain to collect firewood and there I see a hill covered with fine peach trees. I've had seven good feeds of peaches there."

"That hill is called Tender Peach Hill. If you have eaten there seven times you must have been here seven years. What sort of Way do you want to learn from me?"

"That depends what you teach me, master. As long as there's a whiff of Way to it, your disciple will learn it."

"There are three hundred and sixty side–entrances to the Way, and they all lead to a True Result," the Patriarch said. "Which branch would you like to study?"

"I will do whatever you think best, master," replied Monkey.

"What about teaching you the Way of Magic Arts?"

"What does 'the Way of Magic Arts' mean?"

"Magic arts," the Patriarch replied, "include summoning Immortals, using the magic sandboard, and divining by milfoil. With them one can learn how to bring on good fortune and avert disaster."

"Can you become immortal this way?" asked Monkey.

"No, certainly not," replied the Patriarch.

"No. Shan't learn it."

Chapter 2

22

Journey to the West

"Shall I teach you the Way of Sects?" the Patriarch asked.

"What are the principles of the Sects?" said Monkey.

"Within the branch of Sects, there is Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, the study of the Negative and Positive, Mohism, medicine, reading scriptures and chanting the name of a Buddha. You can also summon Immortals and Sages with this branch."

"Can you attain immortality that way?" asked Monkey.

"To try and attain immortality that way," the Patriarch replied, "is like 'putting a pillar in the wall.'"

"Master," Monkey said, "I'm a simple chap and I can't understand your technical jargon. What do you mean by 'putting a pillar in the wall?'"

"When a man builds a house and wants to make it strong he puts a pillar in the wall. But when the day comes for his mansion to collapse the pillar is bound to rot."

"From what you say," Monkey observed, "it's not eternal. No. Shan't learn it."

"Shall I teach you the Way of Silence?" the Patriarch then asked.

"What True Result can be got from Silence?" said Monkey.

"It involves abstaining from grain, preserving one's essence, silence, inaction, meditation, abstaining from speech, eating vegetarian food, performing certain exercises when asleep or standing up, going into trances, and being walled up in total isolation."

"Is this a way of becoming immortal?" Monkey asked.

"It's like building the top of a kiln with sun – dried bricks," the patriarch replied.

"You do go on, master," said Sun Wukong. "I've already told you that I can't understand your technical jargon.

What does 'building the top of a kiln with sun – dried bricks' mean?"

"If you build the top of a kiln with sun – dried bricks they may make it look all right, but if they have not been hardened with fire and water, then they will crumble away in the first heavy rainstorm."

"There's nothing eternal about that either, then," replied Monkey. "No. Shan't learn that."

"Shall I teach you the Way of Action then?" the Patriarch asked.

"What's that like?" Monkey asked.

"It involves acting and doing, extracting the Negative and building up the Positive, drawing the bow and loading the crossbow, rubbing the navel to make the subtle humors flow, refining elixirs according to formulae, lighting fires under cauldrons, consuming 'Red lead,' purifying 'Autumn Stone,' and drinking women's milk."

"Can doing things like that make me live for ever?" Monkey asked.

Chapter 2

23

Journey to the West

"To try and attain immortality that way is like 'lifting the moon out of water.'"

"What does 'lifting the moon out of water' mean?"

"The moon is in the sky," the Patriarch replied, "and only its reflection is in the water. Although you can see it there, you will try in vain to lift it out."

"No. Shan't learn that," Monkey exclaimed.

When the Patriarch heard this he gasped and climbed down from his dais. Pointing at Sun Wukong with his cane he said, "You won't study this and you won't study that, so what do you want, you monkey?" He went up to Monkey and hit him three times on the head, then went inside with his hands behind his back and shut the main door, abandoning them all. The class was shocked, and they all blamed Sun

Wukong.

"You cheeky ape, you've no idea how to behave. The master was teaching you the Way, so why did you have to argue with him instead of learning from him? Now you've offended him we don't know when he'll come out again." They were all very angry with him and regarded him with loathing and contempt. But Sun Wukong was not bothered in the least, and his face was covered with smiles.

The Monkey King had understood the riddle, and had the answer hidden away in his mind. So he did not argue with the others but bore it all without a word. When the Patriarch hit him three times he had been telling him to pay attention at the third watch; and when he went inside with his hands behind his back and shut the main door he had told the Monkey King to go in through the back door and be taught the Way in secret.

The delighted Sun Wukong spent the rest of that day with the others in front of the Three Stars Cave, looking at the sky and impatient for night to come. At dusk he went to bed like all the others, pretended to close his eyes, controlled his breathing, and calmed himself down. Nobody beats the watches or calls out the hour in the mountains, so he had no way of knowing the time except by regulating the breath going in and out of his nose. When he reckoned that it was about the third watch he got up very quietly, dressed, and slipped out through the front door away from the others. When he was outside he looked up and saw The moon was bright and clear and cold,

The vast space of the eight points was free from dust.

Deep in the trees a bird slept hidden,

While the water flowed from the spring.

Fireflies scattered their lights

And a line of geese was stretched across the clouds.

It was exactly the third watch,

The right time to ask about the Way.

Chapter 2

Watch the Monkey King as he follows the old path to the back door, which he found to be ajar. "The Patriarch has left the door open, so he really intends to teach me the Way," he exclaimed in delight. He tiptoed toward, went in sideways through the door, and walked over to the Patriarch's bed, where he saw the Patriarch sleeping curled up, facing the inside of the room. Not daring to disturb him, Sun Wukong knelt in front of the bed. Before long the Patriarch woke up, stretched out both his legs, and mumbled to himself:

"It's hard, hard, hard. The Way is very obscure,

Don't make light of the Gold and the Cinnabar.

To teach miraculous spells to any but the Perfect Man,

Is to tire the voice and dry the tongue in vain."

Sun Wukong said in reply, "Master, your disciple has been kneeling here for a long time."

When the Patriarch heard that it was Sun Wukong who was speaking he pulled some clothes on, sat up cross-legged, and shouted, "It's that monkey. Why have you come into my room instead of sleeping out in front?"

"Master, you told me publicly in front of the altar yesterday that your disciple was to come in here through the back gate at the third watch as you were going to teach me the Way. That is why I made so bold as to come to pay my respects beside my master's bed."

The Patriarch was very pleased to hear this and said to himself, "This wretch was indeed born of Heaven and Earth. Otherwise he wouldn't have been able to understand my cryptic message."

Sun Wukong said, "There is no third pair of ears in this room; your disciple is the only other person here. I hope, master, that in your great mercy you will teach me the Way of Immortality. If you do, I'll always be grateful to you."

"You are predestined," the Patriarch said, "so I shall be happy to tell you. Since you understood my cryptic message, come over here and listen carefully while I teach you the miraculous Way of Immortality." Sun Wukong kowtowed with gratitude and knelt before the bed, listening with all his attention. The Patriarch said:

"True spells, revealing secrets and all powerful,

Are the only sure way of protecting one's life.

They all come from essence, vapour, and spirit,

Must be stored away securely, and never be divulged.

Chapter 2

Must never be divulged, and be stored in the body,

Then the Way I teach you will flourish of itself.

Many are the benefits of learning spells:

They give protection from evil desires and make one pure.

Make one pure with a dazzling radiance

Like a bright moon shining on a cinnabar tower.

The moon contains a Jade Rabbit, the sun a Golden Crow,

The Tortoise and the Snake are always intertwined.

Always intertwined, then life is firm,

And one can plant golden lotuses in fire.

Grasp all the Five Elements and turn them upside down,

And when you are successful you can become a Buddha, or an Immortal."

The Patriarch's explanation went to the root of things, and Sun Wukong's heart was filled with bliss as he committed the spells to memory. He bowed to the Patriarch to express his deep gratitude and went out of the back door to look. He saw that there was a trace of white in the East, while the golden light of the moon was shining in the West. He went to the front door by the old path, pushed it open gently, and went in.

He sat down where he had been sleeping earlier, shook his bedding

and said loudly, "It's dawn, it's dawn. Get up." The others were all asleep, unaware of Sun Wukong's good fortune. At daybreak he got up and muddled through the day, while secretly keeping to what he had been told. In the afternoon and evening he regulated his breathing.

After three years had passed in this way the Patriarch once more sat on his lecturing throne and expounded the Dharma to the students. He recounted famous sayings and parables, and discussed external phenomena and external appearances.

Without warning he asked, "Where is Sun Wukong?" Sun Wukong went forward, knelt down and replied,

"Your disciple is present."

"What Way have you cultivated since coming here?"

"Your disciple is now fairly well conversant with the Dharma," Sun Wukong replied, "and my Source is getting gradually stronger."

"If you are conversant with the Dharma and you know about the Source," the Patriarch replied, "and if the spirit has already flowed into you, then you must beware of the 'Three Disasters.'"

Sun Wukong thought for a long time, then he said, "Patriarch, you're talking rubbish. I have often heard that the Way is lofty and its power mighty, that it is as eternal as Heaven, that it can overcome fire and water, and prevent all illnesses from arising, so how could there be "Three Disasters?'"

To this the Patriarch replied, "This is not the ordinary Way: it involves seizing the very creation of Heaven and Earth, and encroaching on the hidden workings of the sun and moon. Once the elixir is made, devils and spirits cannot tolerate it. Although it will preserve the youthfulness of your face and prolong your life, in five hundred years' time Heaven will strike you with a thunderbolt. You must be clear −sighted in nature and mind, so that you can hide from it before it comes. If you succeed in avoiding it you will live as long as Heaven; and if you don't, it will kill you. Another five hundred years later Heaven will burn you with fire. This fire will be not heavenly fire or

ordinary fire but 'hidden fire'. It will burn you from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head; your five viscera will be reduced to ashes, your four limbs will be destroyed, and a thousand years of asceticism will have been so much wasted time. Yet another five hundred years later a wind will blow at you. It will not be the North, South, East, or West wind, nor will it be a warm, fragrant wind from the Northwest; nor will it be the kind of wind that blows among flowers, willows, pine, and bamboo. It will be what is called a 'monster wind'. It will blow through the crown of your head down into your six entrails. It will go through the Cinnabar Field below your navel and penetrate your nine orifices. Your flesh and your bones will be destroyed and your body will disintegrate. So you must avoid all three of these disasters."

When he heard this Sun Wukong's hair stood on end, and he kowtowed with the words, "I implore you, my lord, to show pity and teach me how to avoid these three disasters. If you do I will be grateful to you for ever."

"That would be easy," the Patriarch replied, "but for the fact that you are different from other people – –which means that I can't."

"I have a head that faces the sky and feet standing on earth," said Sun Wukong. "I have nine orifices and four limbs, five viscera and six entrails. How am I different from anyone else?"

"Although you are quite like other people, your cheeks are too small." Now the Monkey had a funny face, with cheeks that caved inwards and a sharp chin.

Sun Wukong felt it with his hand and replied with a laugh, "Master, you didn't take everything into account.

Although I'm a bit short of jaw, I've got more dewlap than other people to make up for it."

"Very well then," the Patriarch said, "which would you prefer to learn: the thirty–six heavenly transformations or the seventy–two earthly ones?"

"Your disciple wants to get as much out of it as he can, so I would like to learn the seventy–two earthly ones."

"If that's what you want," the Patriarch replied, "come here and I'll teach you the spells." Thereupon he whispered into Sun Wukong's ear, and who knows what miraculous spells he taught him? The Monkey

King was the sort of person who understands everything once he is told a tiny part, and he learned the spells on the spot. He practiced and trained until he had mastered all seventy – two transformations. One day the Patriarch and all his disciples were enjoying the sunset outside the Three Stars Cave.

Chapter 2

27

Journey to the West

The Patriarch asked Sun Wukong, "Have you succeeded yet?"

Sun Wukong replied, "Thanks to your infinite mercy, master, your disciple's results have been perfect, and I can now rise on the clouds and fly."

"Let me see you try a flight," the Patriarch said. Sun Wukong used his skill to perform a series of somersaults that carried him fifty or sixty feet into the air, then walked around on the clouds for about as long as it takes to eat a meal.

He covered about a mile altogether before landing in front of the Patriarch, folding his arms across his chest, and saying, "Master, that's flying and soaring in the clouds." The Patriarch laughed.

"That's not soaring on the clouds – – it's just climbing up them. There is an old saying that 'an Immortal visits the Northern Sea in the morning and Cangwu in the evening'. But to take as long as you did just to go a mile doesn't count as climbing on the clouds."

"How can it be possible to visit the Northern Sea in the morning and Cangwu in the evening?" Sun Wukong asked.

"All cloud – soarers start off from the Northern Sea early in the morning, visit the Eastern, Western and Southern Seas, and then come back to Cangwu; Cangwu is what the Northern Sea is called in the Lingling language. When you can go beyond all four seas in a single day you can regard yourself as a cloud – soarer."

"But that must be very difficult," Sun Wukong observed.

"Where there's a will there's a way," the Patriarch replied.

"Nothing by halves, master," replied Sun Wukong with bows and

kowtows, "I beg of you in your great mercy to teach me the art of cloud—soaring. I promise that I will always be grateful."

"Immortals take off with a stamp of their feet," said the Patriarch, "but you do it differently— —just now I saw you pull yourself up. As that is the way you do it, I'll show you how to do it your own way and teach you the

'somersault cloud.'" Sun Wukong bowed again, imploring him to do so, and the Patriarch taught him the spell.

"For this kind of cloud," the Patriarch said, "you make the magic by clasping your hands in the special way, recite the words of the spell, clench your fist, shake yourself, and jump. With one somersault you can go sixty thousand miles." When the others heard this they all exclaimed with a laugh.

"Lucky old Sun Wukong. With magic like this he could be—a messenger delivering official letters and reports, and he'd never go short of a meal." When it was dark the Patriarch and his pupils returned to the cave. That night Sun Wukong moved his spirit, practiced the technique, and mastered the cloud somersault. From then on he was free from all restraint and he enjoyed the delights of immortality, drifting around as he pleased.

On a day when spring was giving way to summer, and all the students had been sitting under some pine trees listening to lectures for a long time, they said, "Sun Wukong, in what life did you earn your present destiny?

The other day our teacher whispered to you how to do the transformations to avoid the Three Disasters. Can you do them all yet?"

"It's true, brothers," said Sun Wukong with a grin, "I can do them all. In the first place, it's because our master taught me; and in the second place, it's because I practiced them hard day and night."

Chapter 2

"This would be a good time for you to give us a demonstration." At this suggestion Sun Wukong braced his spirit to show off his skill.

"What's it to be, brothers? Tell me what you'd like me to turn myself into."

"Turn into a pine tree," they all said. Sun Wukong clenched his fist, said the magic words, shook himself, and changed into a pine tree. It was truly

Green and misty throughout the four seasons,

Raising its upright beauty to the clouds.

Not in the least like a demon monkey,

Every inch a tree that withstands frost and snow.

When the students saw it they clapped their hands and chuckled aloud, saying, "Good old monkey, good old monkey." They did not realize that the row they were making had disturbed the Patriarch, who rushed out through the door, dragging his stick behind him.

"Who's making a row out here?" he asked. The students hurriedly pulled themselves together, straightened their clothes and went over to him.

Sun Wukong, who had now resumed his real appearance, said from the forest, "Master, we were holding a discussion here, and there were no outsiders making a din."

"Yelling and shouting like that," the Patriarch angrily roared, "is no way for those cultivating their conduct to behave. If you are cultivating your conduct, the subtle vapours escape when you open your mouth, and when you wag your tongue, trouble starts. What was all the laughing and shouting about"

"Just now Sun Wukong did a transformation for fun. We told him to turn himself into a pine tree, and he did.

We all praised and applauded him, which was why we disturbed you with the noise, master. We beg you to forgive us."

The Patriarch sent them all away except for Sun Wukong, to whom he said, "Come here. Is that a way to use your spirit? To change into a pine tree? Is this a skill you should be showing off in front of people? If you saw somebody else doing that, wouldn't you ask him to teach you? If other people see you doing it, they're bound to ask you to teach them, and if you want to keep out of trouble you'll have to do

so; otherwise they may do you harm, and then your life will be in danger."

Sun Wukong kowtowed and said, "Please forgive me, master."

"I shan't punish you," the Patriarch replied, "but you'll have to go." Sun Wukong's eyes filled with tears.

"Master, where am I to go?"

"Go back to where you came from." Sun Wukong had a sudden awakening, and he said, "I came from the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in the country of Aolai in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body."

"If you hurry back there," the Patriarch replied, "you will be able to preserve your life. If you stay here it will be absolutely impossible to do so." Sun Wukong accepted his punishment.

"Yes, master," he said. "I've been away from home for twenty years and I do miss the old days and my children and grandchildren. But when I remember that I have not yet repaid your enormous generosity to me, I can't bring myself to go."

"What sort of kindness would you be doing me if you stayed? I'll be happy enough if you keep me out of any disasters you cause."

Seeing that there was nothing else for it, Sun Wukong bowed and took leave of him, saying good–bye to all the other students.

"Now that you're going," the Patriarch said, "I'm sure that your life will not be a good one. Whatever disasters you cause and crimes you commit, I forbid you under any circumstances to call yourself my disciple. If you so much as hint at it I'll know at once, and I'll tear off your monkey skin, chop up your bones, and banish your soul to the Ninth Darkness. I won't let you out for ten thousand aeons."

"I promise never to give away a single letter of your name," said Sun Wukong. "I'll just say that I taught myself."

Sun Wukong took his leave and went away. Making the spell by

clasping his fist he jumped head over heels, summoned a somersault cloud, and went back to the Eastern Continent. Within two hours he saw the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. The Handsome Monkey King was so pleased that he said to himself:

"When I left here my mortal flesh and bones were heavy,

But now I have the Way my body's light.

No one in the world has real determination,

To the firm will, the hidden becomes clear.

When I last crossed the seas the waves got in my way,

But now on my return the journey's easy.

The parting words still echo in my ears;

When will I see The Eastern Ocean again?"

Chapter 2

30

Journey to the West

Sun Wukong put away his cloud and headed straight to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. As he followed the path there he heard the call of the cranes and the cries of the apes. The crane calls echoed beyond the Milky Way, and the ape cries were pathetically sad.

Sun Wukong shouted, "Children, I'm back."

Big monkeys and little monkeys came bounding in their thousands and tens of thousands from caves in the cliffs, from the grass and flowers, and down from the trees. They all crowded round the Handsome Monkey King, kowtowed and said, "Your Majesty, you're a cool one. How could you stay away for so long, abandoning us all here? We've been desperate for you to come back. A demon has been mistreating us terribly. He's occupied our Water Curtain Cave, and we've been fighting for our lives with him. Recently he's been stealing our things and carrying off many of our youngsters. We've had to stay awake all night to guard our families. Thank goodness you've come back! Another year without you, Your Majesty, and every one of us would be under his control, cave and all."

Sun Wukong was furious, "Who is this demon? What an outrage! Tell me everything about him, and then I'll go and give him what's coming to him."

The monkey host kowtowed again and said, "Your Majesty, the wretch calls himself the Demon King of Confusion. He lives North of here."

"How far away is his lair?" Sun Wukong asked.

"He comes and goes in cloud and mist with wind and rain, or thunder and lightning, so we don't know how far it is."

"If that's how it is," Sun Wukong replied, "then don't worry. Just keep yourselves amused while I go and find him."

The splendid Monkey King jumped up into the air, and as he somersaulted towards the North he saw a high and precipitous mountain. It was a fine sight:

Perpendicular peaks jutting straight up,

Deep – sunk winding streams.

The perpendicular peaks jutting straight up pierced the sky;

The deep – sunk winding streams led to the underworld.

On pairs of cliffs the plants compete in strangeness;

Elsewhere pine vies in greenness with bamboo.

To the left are docile dragons,

To the right are tame tigers.

Iron oxen ploughing are a common sight,

Golden coins are always sown as seeds.

Hidden birds sing beautifully,

Red phoenixes stand in the sun.

Racing over stones, the clear waves

Twist and bend in a vicious torrent.

Many are the famous mountains in the world,

And many the flowers that bloom and wither on them.

But this scenery is eternal,

Unchanging through the four seasons.

It is truly the mountain from which the Three Worlds spring,

The Cave in the Belly of the Water that nourishes the Five Elements.

As the Handsome Monkey King stood gazing in silence at this view, he heard voices. When he went down the mountainside to look he found the Cave in the Belly of the Water facing the cliff. Several minor demons were dancing around in front of the cave doors, and they ran away as soon as they saw Sun Wukong.

"Wait a moment," Sun Wukong said. "I want you to take a message for me. I am the King of the Water Curtain Cave in the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit that lies due South of here. I've come to find that Demon of Confusion of yours, or whatever he's called, the one who's been mistreating my children and grandchildren, and have it out with him."

The minor demons scuttled into the cave and reported, "A disaster, Your Majesty."

"What do you mean, disaster?" the demon king asked.

"There's a monkey outside the cave," the minor demons reported, "who says that he's the King of the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. He says that you have been bullying his children and grandchildren, and that he's come specially to find you to have it out with you." The demon king laughed.

"Those monkey devils are always going on about a king of theirs who renounced the world to cultivate his conduct; I suppose it must be him who's here now. Did you see how he was dressed or what weapons he was carrying?"

"He hasn't got any weapons. He's bareheaded, and he's wearing a red gown belted with a yellow silk sash, and a pair of black boots. He isn't

dressed like a monk, or a layman, or an Immortal. He's bare – handed and empty – fisted, and he's standing outside the doors yelling."

"Bring me my armour and weapons," said the demon king when he heard this. The minor demons produced them at once, and when he had donned his armour he went out of the door with all the demons, his sword in Chapter 2

his hand.

"Who is the King of the Water Curtain Cave?" he roared. Sun Wukong took a quick look at him and saw that On his head he wore a dark golden helmet,

Glistening in the sun.

On his body he wore a black silk gown,

Flapping in the breeze.

Below that he wore black metal armour,

Girt with a leather belt.

On his feet he wore patterned boots,

As splendid as a field – marshal's.

His waist was ten feet round,

And his height was thirty cubits.

In his hand he held a sword,

With gleaming point and edge.

He called himself the Demon King of Confusion

And his appearance was truly dazzling.

"You insolent demon," shouted the Monkey King. "Your eyes may be big but you can't see who I am."

The demon king laughed at him. "You don't even stand four feet from

the ground, you're still in your twenties, and you've got no weapon in your hand. What sort of mad courage makes you challenge me to a fight?"

"You insolent demon," retorted Sun Wukong, "how blind you are. You may think I'm small, but I can grow easily enough. You may think I'm unarmed, but I could pull the moon down from the sky with my two hands.

Don't worry, old Sun Wukong will sock you one." Sun Wukong gave a jump and leapt into the air, taking a swing at his face.

The demon king put out his hand to stop him and said, "Look how big I am, you dwarf. If you use your fists, I'll use my sword. But I'd only make myself look ridiculous if I killed you with a sword. Wait till I've put my sword down and then I'll give you a display of boxing."

"Well said," exclaimed Sun Wukong, "spoken like a man. Come on then." The demon king dropped his guard to throw a punch, and Sun Wukong rushed in towards him, punching and kicking. When he spread out his hand it was enormous, and when he clenched his fist it was very hard. Sun Wukong hit the demon king in the ribs, kicked his backside, and smashed several of his joints. The demon king seized his steel sword that was as big as a plank, and swung it at Sun Wukong's skull. Sun Wukong dodged the blow, and the sword only split air. Seeing how ugly the demon king had turned, Sun Wukong used his magic art of getting extra bodies. He pulled out one of his hairs, popped it in his mouth, chewed it up, and blew it out into the air, shouting,

"Change!" It turned into two or three hundred little monkeys, who all crowded round him.

Sun Wukong now had an immortal body, and there was no magic transformation of which he was not capable.

Since he had followed the Way he could change each of the eighty −four thousand hairs on his body into anything he wanted. The little monkeys were too quick and nimble for sword or spear.

Look at them, leaping forwards and jumping backwards, rushing up and surrounding the demon king, grabbing him, seizing him, poking him in the backside, pulling at his feet, punching him, kicking him, tearing his hair out, scratching at his eyes, twisting his nose, all picking him up together and throwing him to the ground. They went on until they had beaten him to a pulp. Sun Wukong snatched his sword from him, told the little monkeys to get out of the way, and brought it down on the crown of his head, splitting it into two.

Then he led his forces charging into the cave, where they exterminated all the demons, big and small. He shook his hair and put it back on his body. The monkeys who did not go back on his body were the little monkeys the demon king had carried off from the Water Curtain Cave. Sun Wukong asked them how they had got there.

There were thirty of forty of them, and they replied with tears in their eyes, "It was after Your Majesty went off to become an Immortal. He has been fighting with us for the last two years. He brought us all here by force. All the things here – –the stone bowls and plates – –were stolen from our cave by that beast."

"If it's our stuff, take it all out," said Sun Wukong. He then set fire to the Cave in the Belly of the Water and burnt it to a cinder.

"Come back with me," he ordered the monkeys.

"Your Majesty," they replied, "when we came here all we could hear was the wind howling in our ears as it blew us here, so we don't know the way. How are we ever going to get back?"

"There's nothing at all to that spell he used," said Sun Wukong. "I can do it too, as now I only have to know the smallest bit about something to understand it completely. Shut your eyes and don't worry."

Splendid Monkey King. He recited a spell, took them riding on a hurricane, then brought the cloud down to the ground.

"Open your eyes and look, children," he shouted. As soon as the monkeys' feet touched the ground they recognized their home. In their delight they all ran along the familiar path to the cave, and the monkeys who had stayed in the cave all crowded in as well. They divided themselves into age – groups and bowed in homage to the Monkey King. Wine and food was laid out to celebrate, and they asked him how he had defeated the demon king and saved their children. When Sun Wukong had told them the whole story the monkeys were full of admiration.

"Where did you learn such arts, Your Majesty?" they asked insistently.

Chapter 2

34

Journey to the West

"When I left you," Sun Wukong replied, "I followed the waves and the currents, and drifted across the Eastern Ocean to the Southern Jambu Continent. Here I taught myself to take human form and to wear these clothes and boots. I swaggered around for eight or nine years, but I never found the Way, so I sailed across the Western Ocean to the Western Continent of Cattle—gift. After long enquiries I was lucky enough to meet a venerable Immortal, who taught me the True Result, which makes me as immortal as heaven, and the great Dharma Gate to eternal youth." The monkeys all congratulated him and exclaimed that his like could not be found in a billion years.

Sun Wukong laughed and said, "Children, we should congratulate ourselves on having a surname."

"What is Your Majesty's surname?" the monkey masses asked.

"My surname is now Sun, and my Buddhist name is Wukong."

The monkeys all clapped their hands with joy and said, "Your Majesty is Old Sun, and we are Second Sun, Third Sun, Thin Sun, Little Sun——a family of Suns, a nation of Suns, a den of Suns." They all offered Old Sun their respects, with big plates and small bowls of coconut toddy, grape wine, magic flowers, and magic fruit.

The whole household was happy. My word!

By uniting themselves with a single surname

They are waiting to be transferred to the Register of Immortals.

If you don't know how this ended and want to know about the rest of their lives there, then listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 3

The Four Seas and Thousand Mountains All Submit

In the Ninth Hell the Tenth Category Is Struck Off the Register We have related how the Handsome Monkey King returned home in glory,

bringing a large sword he had captured when he killed the Demon King of Confusion. From then on they practiced the military arts every day. He asked the little monkeys to cut down bamboo to make spears, carve swords out of wood, and learn to use banners and whistles. They learned to advance and retreat, and build a camp with a stockade round it.

They spent a lot of time playing at this.

Once Sun Wukong was sitting in his seat of meditation when he wondered: "What would happen to us if our games were taken for the real thing? What if it alarmed some human monarch or gave offence to some king of birds or beasts? They might say that we were having military training for a rebellion, and attack us with their armies. You would be no match for them with your bamboo spears and wooden swords. We must have really sharp swords and halberds. What are we to do about it?"

When the monkeys heard this they all said with alarm, "Your Majesty has great foresight, but there's nowhere we can get them." When it was the turn of four older monkeys to speak – –two bare–bottomed apes and two Chapter 3

gibbons – –they came forward and said, "Your Majesty, if you want sharp weapons they can be very easily obtained."

"How could it be easy?" asked Sun Wukong.

"To the East of our mountain," they replied, "there is a lake some seventy miles wide that is the boundary of the country of Aolai. That country has a princely capital, and huge numbers of soldiers and civilians live in the city. It must have workshops for gold, silver, bronze and iron. If you went there, Your Majesty, you could either buy arms or get them made; then you could train us to use them in the defense of our mountain. This would give us long–term security." Sun Wukong was delighted with the suggestion.

"Wait here while I go there," he said.

Splendid Monkey King! He leapt on to his somersault cloud, crossed the seventy miles of lake, and saw that on the other side there was indeed a city wall, a moat, streets, markets, ten thousand houses, a

thousand gates, and people coming and going in the sunlight.

"There must be ready – made weapons here," Sun Wukong thought, "and getting a few by magic would be much better than buying them." So he made a magic with his fist and said the words of the spell, sucked in some air from the Southeast, and blew it hard out again. It turned into a terrifying gale carrying sand and stones with it.

Where the thunderclouds rise the elements are in chaos;

Black fogs thick with dust cloak the earth in darkness.

Boiling rivers and seas terrify the crabs and fish;

As trees are snapped off in mountain forests tigers and wolves flee.

No business is done in any branch of commerce;

And no one is working at any kind of trade.

In the palace the king has gone to his inner quarters;

And the officials in front of the steps have returned to their offices.

The thrones of princes are all blown over;

Towers of five phoenixes are shaken to their foundations.

Where the storm blew, the prince of Aolai fled in terror, and gates and doors were shut in the streets and markets. Nobody dared to move outside. Sun Wukong landed his cloud and rushed straight through the gates of the palace to the arsenal and the military stores, opened the doors, and saw countless weapons: swords, pikes, sabres, halberds, battleaxes, bills, scimitars, maces, tridents, clubs, bows, crossbows, forks, and spears were all there.

At the sight of them he said happily, "How many of these could I carry by myself? I'd better use the magic for dividing up my body."

Splendid Monkey King. He plucked a hair from his body, chewed it up, spat it out, made the magic with his fist, said the words of the

spell, and shouted "Change!" It turned into hundreds and thousands of little monkeys, who rushed wildly about grabbing weapons. The strong ones took six or seven each and the weaker ones two or three, and between them they removed the lot. He climbed back up on the clouds, called up a gale by magic, and took all the little monkeys home with him.

The monkeys big and small of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit were playing outside the gates of the cave when they heard the wind. At the sight of countless monkey spirits flying through the air they fled and hid. A moment later the Handsome Monkey King landed his cloud, put away his mists, shook himself, replaced his hair, and threw all the weapons into a pile beside the mountain.

"Children," he shouted, "come and get your weapons." When the monkey masses looked they saw Sun Wukong standing by himself on some level ground, and they all rushed over to him to kowtow and asked what had happened. Sun Wukong told them the whole story of how he had raised the gale and taken the weapons. After all the monkeys had thanked him they snatched sabres, grabbed swords, seized battleaxes, fought for pikes, drew bows, stretched crossbows, shouted, yelled, and so amused themselves for the rest of the day.

The next day they paraded as usual. Sun Wukong assembled all the monkey host, and they numbered over forty–seven thousand. This had alarmed all the strange beasts of the mountain– –wolves, monsters, tigers, leopards, deer, muntjacs, river–deer, foxes, wild cats, badgers, raccoons, lions, elephants, horses, orangutans, bears, stags, wild boar, mountain cattle, antelopes, rhinoceroses, little dogs, huge dogs. The kings of various kinds of monsters, seventy–two in all, all came to pay homage to the Monkey King. They offered tribute every year and attended court in each of the four seasons. They also took part in drill and paid their seasonal grain levies. Everything was so orderly that the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit was as secure as an iron bucket or a wall of bronze. The kings of the monsters sent gongs, drums, coloured flags, helmets, and armour in great abundance, and every day there were military exercises.

One day, amid all this success, the Handsome Monkey King suddenly said to the other monkeys, "You are now expert in the bow and crossbow, and highly skilled in other weapons; but this sword of mine is too clumsy for my liking. What shall I do about it?"

The four veteran monkeys came forward and submitted a suggestion: "Your Majesty is an Immortal, so mortals' weapons are not good

enough for you. We wonder if Your Majesty is able to travel underwater."

"Since hearing the Way," Sun Wukong replied, "I have mastered the seventy – two earthly transformations. My somersault cloud has outstanding magical powers. I know how to conceal myself and vanish. I can make spells and end them. I can reach the sky and find my way into the earth. I can travel under the sun or moon without leaving a shadow or go through metal or stone freely. I can't be drowned by water or burned by fire.

There's nowhere I cannot go."

"If Your Majesty has these magical powers, the stream under our iron bridge leads to the Dragon palace of the Eastern Sea. If you are willing to go down there, go and find the Dragon King and ask him for whatever weapon it is you want. Wouldn't that suit you?"

"Wait till I get back," was Sun Wukong's delighted reply.

Chapter 3

37

Journey to the West

Splendid Monkey King. He leapt to the end of the bridge and made a spell with his fist to ward off the water.

Then he dived into the waves and split the waters to make way for himself till he reached the bed of the Eastern Sea. On his journey he saw a yaksha demon who was patrolling the sea.

The yaksha barred his way and asked, "What sage or divinity are you, pushing the waters aside like that?

Please tell me so that I can make a report and have you properly received."

"I am the Heaven – born Sage Sun Wukong from the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, and your old Dragon King's close neighbour. How is it you don't know me?"

When the yaksha heard this he hurried back to the crystal palace and reported, "Your Majesty, Sun Wukong, the Heaven – born Sage from the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit who says he is your neighbour, is

coming to your palace." Ao Guang, the Old Dragon King of the Eastern Sea, leapt to his feet and went out to meet Sun Wukong with his dragon sons and grandsons, his prawn soldiers, and his crab generals.

"Come in, exalted Immortal," he said, taking Sun Wukong into the palace where they introduced themselves, seated him in the place of honour, and offered him tea. Then the Dragon King asked him, "Exalted Immortal, when did you find the Way, and what magic arts did you acquire?"

"After my birth," said Sun Wukong, "I renounced the world and cultivated my conduct, and thus obtained an immortal and indestructible body. Recently I have trained my sons and grandsons to guard our cave, but unfortunately I have not yet found my self a weapon. I have long heard that my illustrious neighbour enjoys the delights of a jade palace with gate–towers of cowry, and I was sure that you must have some magic weapons to spare, so I have come especially to beg one of you."

Not wishing to refuse this request, the Dragon King sent Commander Perch to fetch a large sword and offer it to Sun Wukong.

"I don't know how to use a sword," said Sun Wukong, "so could I ask you to give me something else?" The Old Dragon King then sent Colonel Mackerel and Guard Commander Eel to fetch a nine–pronged spear.

Sun Wukong leapt down from his seat, took it, tried it out, then flung it down, saying, "It's too light, far too light; and it doesn't suit me. I beg you to give me another."

The Dragon King smiled as he said, "Exalted Immortal, don't you see that this weighs three thousand six hundred pounds?"

"It doesn't suit me, it doesn't suit me at all," protested Sun Wukong.

The Dragon King, feeling frightened now, ordered Provincial Commander Bream and Garrison Commander Carp to bring out a patterned heavenly halberd for warding off spells that weighed seven thousand two hundred pounds.

As soon as he saw it Sun Wukong bounded forward to take it. He tried a few postures and thrusts with it then stuck it in the ground between them. "Still too light, far too light."

The Dragon King, now really terrified, said, "Exalted Immortal, that

halberd is the heaviest weapon in my palace."

"As the old saying goes," said Sun Wukong with a grin, "'Never think the dragon king has no treasures.' Have another look, and if you find anything satisfying I'll give you a good price for it."

"I really have nothing else," the Dragon King replied.

As he was speaking, his dragon wife and dragon daughters came in from the back of the palace and said,

"Your Majesty, by the look of him this sage must be really somebody. The piece of miraculous iron that anchors the Milkey Way in place has been shining with a lovely rosy glow for the last few days, and creating a most auspicious atmosphere. Perhaps it has started to shine to greet this sage."

"That piece of miraculous iron is one of the nails that Yu the Great used to fix the depths of rivers and seas when he brought the waters under control," said the Dragon King. "What use could it be?"

"Never mind whether it's useful or not," his wife replied. "Just give it to him and let him do with it as he pleases. At least you'll get him out of the palace."

The Dragon King did as she suggested and described the piece of iron to Sun Wukong, who said, "Bring it out and let me see."

"It can't be moved. You will have to go and look at it yourself, exalted Immortal."

"Where is it? Take me there," said Sun Wukong.

The Dragon King took him into the middle of the sea treasury, where all of a sudden they could see ten thousand rays of golden light. Pointing at it, the Dragon King said, "That's it, where all the light is coming from."

Sun Wukong hitched up his clothes and went to give it a feel. He found that it was an iron pillar about as thick as a measure for a peck of grain and some twenty feet long. Seizing it with both hands he said,

"It's too thick and too long. If it were a bit shorter and thinner it would do." As soon as these words were out of his mouth this precious piece of iron became several feet shorter and a few inches thinner.

Sun Wukong tossed it in his hands, remarking that it would be even better if it were thinner still. The precious iron thereupon became even thinner. Sun Wukong was taking it out of the sea treasury to have a look at it when he saw that it had two gold bands round it, while the middle part was made of black iron. There was a line of inlaid writing near the bands which said that it was the AS—YOU—WILL COLD—BANDED CUDGEL: WEIGHT 13,500 POUNDS.

Sun Wukong was delighted, though he did not show it. "I think that this little darling will do whatever I want." As he walked along he weighed it in his hand and said reflectively, "If it were even smaller still it would be perfect." By the time he had taken it outside it was twenty feet long and as thick as a rice bowl.

Watch him as he uses his magical powers to try a few routines with it, whirling all round the crystal palace.

The Old Dragon King was trembling with fright, and the little dragons were scared out of their wits.

Terrapins, freshwater turtles, seawater turtles and alligators drew in their heads, while fish, shrimps, lobsters and giant turtles hid their faces.

Holding his treasure in his hands, Sun Wukong sat down in the main hall of the palace of crystal and said with a smile to the Dragon King, "Many thanks, worthy neighbour, for your great generosity."

The Old Dragon King humbly acknowledged his thanks, and Sun Wukong went on, "This piece of iron will be very useful, but there is one more thing I want to ask."

"What might that be, exalted Immortal?" asked the Dragon King.

Chapter 3

"If I hadn't got this cudgel, that would be the end of the matter, but as I have got it the problem is that I don't have—the clothes to go with it.

What are we to do about it? If you have any armour here, I'd be most obliged if you gave me a suit." The Dragon King said he had not any.

"'A guest should not have to trouble two hosts,'" said Sun Wukong. "I won't leave without one."

"Please try some other sea, exalted Immortal——you may find one there."

"'It's better to stay in one house than to visit three.' I beg and implore you to give me a suit."

"I really don't have one," replied the Dragon King. "If I had I would present it to you."

"If you really haven't, then I'll try this cudgel out on you."

"Don't hit me, exalted Immortal, don't hit me," pleaded the Dragon King in terror. "Let me see whether my brothers have one that they could give you."

"Where do your brothers live?"

"They are Ao Qin, the Dragon King of the Southern Sea, Ao Shun, the Dragon King of the Northern Sea, and Ao Run, the Dragon King of the Southern Sea."

"I'm damned if I'm going there: as the saying goes, 'Two in the pocket is better than three owing.' So be a good chap and give me one."

"There is no need for you to go, lofty Immortal," the Dragon King replied, "I have an iron drum and a bronze bell. In an emergency we strike them to bring my brothers here in an instant."

"In that case," said Sun Wukong, "hurry up and sound them." And indeed an alligator general struck the bell while a terrapin marshal beat the drum. The sound of the bell and the drum startled the other three dragon kings, who had arrived and were waiting together outside within the instant.

One of them, Ao Qin, said, "Elder Brother, what's up? Why the drum and the bell?"

"It hurts me to tell you, brother," the Old Dragon King replied. "There's this so—called heaven—born sage from the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit who came here this morning saying that I was his neighbour,

then demanded a weapon. I offered him a steel – pronged spear but he said it was too small, and a patterned halberd that he said was too light. Then he picked up the miraculous iron that fastens the Milky Way and tried a few movements with it. Now he's sitting in the palace and demanding a suit of armour, but we haven't got one.

That's why I used the bell and the drum to call you here. You three must have some armour. Please give him a suit, then we can get rid of him."

When Ao Qin heard this he said in a fury, "To arms, brothers. Arrest the criminal."

"No! No! It's out of the question," said the Old Dragon King. "If that iron cudgel of his gets you you're done for, if it hits you die, if it comes close your skin is broken, and if it so much as brushes against you your sinews are smashed."

Ao Run, the Dragon King of the Western Sea, said, "Second brother, you must not attack him. Instead we should put a suit of armour together for him, then send him away. We can send a memorial about it to Heaven, then Heaven will of course punish him."

Chapter 3

40

Journey to the West

"You're right," said Ao Shun, the Dragon King of the Northern Sea. "I have a pair of lotus – root cloud – walking shoes."

"I've brought a suit of golden chain mail," said Ao Run, the Dragon King of the Western Sea.

"And I have a phoenix – winged purple gold helmet," added Ao Qin, the Dragon King of the Southern Sea. The Old Dragon King was very pleased, and he brought them into the palace to meet Sun Wukong and present the equipment to him.

Sun Wukong put on the golden helmet and the armour and the cloud – walking shoes, then charged out, waving his cudgel and saying to the dragons, "My apologies for disturbing you." The four Dragon Kings were most indignant, but we will not go into their discussions on the protest they sent to Heaven.

Watch the Monkey King as he parts the waters and goes straight back to the iron bridge, where the four senior apes can be seen waiting for him at the head of the monkey host. Sun Wukong suddenly leapt out of the waves without a drop of water on him and gleaming with gold.

As he came across the bridge the monkeys were so astonished that they fell to their knees and said, "How splendid you look, Your Majesty, how splendid." Sun Wukong, his face lit up with youthful vigor, climbed up to his throne, thrust his cudgel into the ground in their midst. The foolish monkeys all tried to grab this treasure, but it was as futile as a dragonfly trying to shake an iron tree: they were unable to move it in the slightest.

Biting their fingers and sticking out their tongues they said, "Grandpa, it's so heavy, how can you possibly lift it?"

Sun Wukong went over, lifted it with one hand, and laughed as he said to them, "Everything has its rightful owner. This little treasure has been lying in the sea treasury for goodness knows how many thousands of years, but it just happened to start shining this year. The Dragon King thought it was just a piece of ordinary iron, and said it was the miraculous treasure that holds the bed of the Milky Way in place. None of his men could move it, so he had to ask me to go and fetch it myself. It was more than twenty feet long then, and as thick as a peck—measure. When I picked it up I felt that it was too big, and it shrank till it was several times as small. I told it to get even smaller, and it did that too; then I told it to get smaller still, and it got many times smaller again. I hurried out into the light of day to look at it, and I saw that there was an inscription on it that read 'AS—YOU—WILL GOLD—BANDED CUDGEL: WEIGHT 13,500 POUNDS'. Stand aside, and I'll make it change again."

Holding his treasure in his hand he said, "Shrink, shrink, shrink," and it became as small as an embroidery needle, tiny enough to be hidden in his ear.

"Your Majesty," the monkeys cried out in astonishment, "bring it out and play with it again."

So the Monkey King brought it out of his ear again, laid it on the palm of his hand, and said, "Grow, grow, grow." It became as thick as a peck again and twenty feet long. Now that he was really enjoying himself he bounded over the bridge and went out of the cave. Clasping his treasure he used some of his heaven and earth magic, bowed, and shouted, "Grow."

He became a hundred thousand feet tall; his head was as big as a mountain, his waist like a range of hills, his eyes flashed like lightning, his mouth seemed to be a bowl of blood, and his teeth were as swords and halberds; the cudgel in his hands reached up to the Thirty－third Heaven and down to the Eighteenth Hell. The tigers, leopards and wolves, the beasts of the mountain, and the seventy －two monster kings all kowtowed and Chapter 3

bowed in terror, trembling so much that they went out of their minds. A moment later he reverted to his proper size, turned his treasure into an embroidery needle, hid it in his ear, and went back to the cave. The panic－stricken kings of the monsters all came to offer their congratulations.

There was a great display of banners and drums, and the air resounded to the sound of gongs and bells. Rare delicacies were set out in great quantities, cups brimmed with coconut toddy and the wine of the grape, and the Monkey King feasted and drank with his people for a long time. Then training went on as before.

The Monkey King named the four senior apes as his four Stalwart Generals: he named the two bare－bottomed apes Marshal Ma and Marshal Liu, and called the two gibbons General Beng and General Ba. He entrusted the stockade, questions of discipline and rewards to these four. Thus freed from cares, he mounted the clouds and rode the mists, wandering round the four seas and enjoying the thousand mountains. He practiced his martial arts, visited many a hero, used his magical powers, and made a wide and distinguished circle of friends. He met with six sworn brothers of his: the Bull Demon King, the Salamander Demon King, the Roc Demon King, the Camel King, the Macaque King, and the Lion King. With him included they made seven. For days on end they talked about politics and war, passed round the goblet, strummed, sang, piped, danced, went off on days out together, and enjoyed themselves in every possible way. A journey of thousands of miles seemed to them to be no more than a walk in the courtyard. It could be said that they traveled a thousand miles in the time it takes to nod one's head, and covered three hundred with a twist of the waist.

One day he instructed his four Stalwart Generals to arrange a feast for the six other kings. Oxen and horses were slaughtered, sacrifices were

made to Heaven and Earth, and the assembled monsters danced, sang, and drank themselves blotto. When he had seen the six kings out and tipped his senior and junior officials Sun Wukong lay himself down under the shade of the pines beside the bridge and was asleep in an instant. The four Stalwart Generals made the others stand round and guard him, and they all kept their voices down.

In his sleep the Handsome Monkey King saw two men approach him with a piece of paper in their hands on which was written "Sun Wukong." Without allowing any explanations they tied up his soul and dragged it staggering along till they reached a city wall. The Monkey King, who was gradually recovering from his drunken stupor, looked up and saw an iron plate on the wall on which was inscribed WORLD OF

DARKNESS in large letters.

In a flash of realization he said, "The World of Darkness is where King Yama lives. Why have I come here?"

"Your life in the world above is due to end now," his escorts said, "and we were ordered to fetch you."

To this the Monkey King replied, "I have gone beyond the Three Worlds, and I am no longer subject to the Five Elements. I don't come under King Yama's jurisdiction. How dare you grab me, you idiots?" But the fetchers of the dead just went on tugging at him, determined to drag him inside.

The Monkey King lost his temper, pulled his treasure out of his ear, and gave it a shake. It became as thick as a rice bowl. It only took a slight movement of his arm to smash the two fetchers of the dead to pulp. He untied his bonds, loosed his hands, and charged into the city whirling his cudgel, so terrifying the ox–headed and horse–faced devils that they fled in all directions for cover.

All the devil soldiers rushed to the Senluo Palace and reported, "Your Majesty, disaster, disaster! A hairy–faced thunder–god is attacking us out there."

Stricken by panic, the Ten Kings who sit in the ten palaces, judging the criminal cases of the dead, hurriedly straightened their clothing and went out to look. When they saw his ferocious expression they lined up in order and shouted at the tops of their voices, "Please tell us your name, exalted Immortal."

"If you don't know who I am," replied the Monkey King, "then why did you send men to bring me here?"

"We wouldn't dare do such a thing. The messengers must have made a mistake."

"I am Sun Wukong, the Heaven – born sage of the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.

What are your posts?"

"We are the ten kings."

"Tell me your names at once if you don't want a bashing."

To this the ten kings replied, "We are the King of Qinguang, the King of Chujiang, King Songdi, King Wuguan, King Yama, King Impartial, the King of Mount Tai, the Metropolitan King, the King of Biancheng, and the King of the Ever – turning Wheel."

To this Sun Wukong replied, "You are all kings, and have esoteric understanding, so why don't you know any better? I, Sun Wukong, have cultivated the Way of Immortality and will live as long as Heaven. I've soared beyond the Three Worlds and leapt outside the Five Elements, so why did you send your men to get me?"

"Please don't be angry, lofty Immortal," the ten kings said. "Many people in the world share the same name, so perhaps the fetchers of the dead went to the wrong place."

"Nonsense, nonsense. As the saying goes, 'The magistrate may be wrong and the sergeant may be wrong, but the man who comes to get you is never wrong.' Go and get the Register of Life and Death for me to see." The Ten Kings invited him to come into the palace and look through it.

Sun Wukong went into the Senluo Palace with his club in his hand, and sat down in the middle of the hall facing South. The Ten Kings then ordered the presiding judge to fetch the register, and the judge hastened to his office and brought out five or six documents and ten

registers. He looked through them all one by one, but could not find Sun Wukong's name in the sections devoted to hairless creatures, hairy creatures, feathered creatures, insects, or scaly creatures. Then he looked through the monkey section. Now although monkeys looked like men, they were not entered under the humans; although they were like the hairless creatures, they did not live within their boundaries; although they were like running animals, they were not under the jurisdiction of the unicorn; and although they were like birds, they were not ruled by the phoenix. There was another register, and Sun Wukong looked through this one himself. Under "Soul No. 1350" was the name of Sun Wukong, the Heaven–born stone monkey, who was destined to live to the age of 342 and die a good death.

"I won't write down any number of years," said Sun Wukong. "I'll just erase my name and be done with it.

Bring me a brush." The judge hastily handed him a brush and thick, black ink.

Sun Wukong took the register, crossed out all the names in the monkey section, and threw it on the floor with the words, "The account's closed. That's an end of it. We won't come under your control any longer." Then he cudgeled his way out of the World of Darkness. The Ten Kings dared not go near him, and they all went to the Azure Cloud Palace to bow in homage to the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha and discuss the report they would send up to Heaven. But we will not go into this.

After charging out through the city wall the Monkey King tripped over a clump of grass, tried to regain his balance, and woke up with a start. It had all been a dream. As he stretched himself he heard his four Stalwart Generals and the other monkeys saying, "Your Majesty, time to wake up. You drank too much and slept all night."

Chapter 3

"Never mind about my sleeping. I dreamt that two men came for me. They dragged me to the city–wall of the World of Darkness, where I came round. I showed them my magic powers and went yelling all the way to the Senluo Palace, where I had an argument with those Ten Kings and looked through the Register of Life and Death of us. Wherever there was mention of your names in the register, I crossed

them out. We won't come under the jurisdiction of those idiots any more."

All the monkeys kowtowed to him in gratitude. The reason why from that time on so many mountain monkeys have never grown old is that their names are not on the books of the officials of the Underworld.

When the Handsome Monkey King had finished telling his story, the four Stalwart Generals informed the other monster kings, who all came to offer their felicitations. A few days later his six sworn brothers also came to congratulate him, and all were delighted to hear how he had struck the names off the books. We will not describe the daily feasts that followed.

Instead we will describe how one day the Supreme Heavenly Sage, the Greatly Compassionate Jade Emperor of the Azure Vault of Heaven, was sitting on his throne in the Hall of Miraculous Mist in the Golden－gated Cloud Palace, surrounded by his immortal civil and military officials at morning court, when the Immortal Qiu Hongji reported, "Your Majesty, Ao Guang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea, has presented a memorial outside the Hall of Universal Brightness, and is awaiting a summons from your Imperial Majesty."

The Jade Emperor ordered that he be called in, and the Dragon King came to the Hall of Miraculous Mist.

When he had done obeisance an immortal page came from the side to take his memorial. The Jade Emperor read it through. It ran:

Your Subject Ao Guang,

the Humble Dragon of the Eastern Sea of the Eastern Continent of Superior Body in the Nether Watery Regions

Reports to the Jade Emperor of the Azure Vault of Heaven

Recently one Sun Wukong, an immortal fiend born on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit now living in the Water Curtain Cave, bullied this humble dragon and occupied my watery house by force. He demanded a weapon by displaying magical prowess; he insisted on having armour by showing off his evil powers. He terrified the watery tribe and made the tortoises and alligators flee in terror. The dragon of the Southern Sea trembled, the dragon of the Western Sea was made miserable, the dragon of the Northern Sea had to hang his head and come in submission, and I, your subject Ao Guang, humbled myself before him. We had to present him with a miraculous iron cudgel, a

golden phoenix – winged helmet, a suit of chain mail, and a pair of cloud – walking shoes; and we escorted him out politely.

He continued to show off his martial arts and magic powers, and all he had to say for himself was, "My apologies for disturbing you." There is truly no match for him, and he is uncontrollable. Your subject now presents this memorial, and respectfully awaits your sage decision. I humbly beg that heavenly soldiers be sent to arrest this evil demon, so that the sea and the mountains may be at peace, and the ocean may enjoy tranquillity.

When the Jade Emperor had read this through he ordered, "Let the Dragon God return to the Sea; we shall send generals to arrest the demon." The Old Dragon King bowed till his head touched the floor and took his leave.

Then the Venerable Immortal Ge, a heavenly teacher, reported, "Your Majesty, the King of Qinguang, one of the ministers of the Underworld, has come with a memorial from the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha." A jade girl messenger took the memorial, which the Jade Emperor read through. It ran: The regions of darkness are the negative part of the Earth. Heaven contains gods while the Earth has devils; Positive and Negative are in a constant cycle. Birds and beasts are born and die; male and female alternate.

Life is created and change takes place; male and female are conceived and born; this is the order of nature, and it cannot be changed. Now the evil spirit, the Heaven – born monkey of the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, is presently giving full rein to his wicked nature, committing murders, and refusing to submit to discipline. He killed the devil messengers of the Ninth Hell with his magic, and he terrified the Ten Benevolent Kings of the Underworld with his power. He made an uproar in the Senluo Palace and crossed some names out by force. He has made the race of monkeys completely uncontrollable, and given eternal life to the macaques. He has annulled the law of transmigration and brought them beyond birth and death. I, impoverished monk that I am, importune the might of Heaven by presenting this memorial.

I prostrate myself to beg that Heavenly soldiers be despatched to

subdue this fiend, bring the positive and Negative back into order, and give lasting security to the Underworld.

When the Jade Emperor had read this through he ordered, "Let the Lord of Darkness return to the Underworld. We shall send generals to arrest the demon." The King of Qinguang then bowed till his head touched the floor and took his leave.

His Celestial Majesty then asked all his civil and military officials, "When was this monkey demon born?

What is his origin, that he should have such powers?"

Before he had finished speaking, Thousand－mile Eye and Wind －accompanying Ear came forward from the ranks of officials and said, "This demon monkey is the stone monkey who was born of heaven three hundred years ago. At the time nobody paid any attention to him, and we do not know where he refined himself and became an Immortal in recent years, so that he has been able to make the tigers and dragons submit to him and to strike his name off the register of the dead."

"Which divine general shall be sent down to capture him?" asked the Jade Emperor, and before he had finished speaking the Great White Planet stepped forward, bowed down, and submitted, "All beings in the upper worlds that have nine apertures can become Immortals. This monkey has a body that was created by Heaven and Earth and conceived by the sun and moon. His head touches they sky and his feet stand on the earth; he drinks the dew and eats the mist. How does he differ from humans, if he has succeeded in cultivating the way of immortality and can subdue dragons and tigers? I beg Your Majesty to remember your life－giving mercy and hand down a sage edict of amnesty and enlistment, summoning him to this upper world and inscribing his name on the list of officeholders, thus keeping him here under control. If he obeys Your Majesty's heavenly commands, he can later be promoted; and if he disobeys, he can be arrested. This will both avoid military operations and be a way of winning over an Immortal."

The Jade Emperor, delighted with the suggestion, ordered that it should be put into effect. He told the Wenqu Star Officer to compose the edict, and commanded the Great White planet to persuade the monkey to accept Chapter 3

the amnesty.

The Great White Planet left Heaven by the Southern Gate, and brought his propitious cloud down by the Water Curtain Cave, where he said to the little monkeys, "I am an envoy from Heaven, and I am carrying a divine edict inviting your great king to the upper world. Go and tell him at once."

The little monkeys outside conveyed the message by relays into the depths of the cave: "Your Majesty, there's an old man outside carrying a document on his back. He says he's an envoy from Heaven with an invitation for you." The Handsome Monkey King was delighted.

He said, "I'd been thinking of going up to Heaven to have a look round for the past couple of days, and now a heavenly envoy has come to invite me."

"Ask him in at once," he shouted, hastily straightening his clothes and going out to meet the envoy.

The Planet came straight in, stood facing the South, and said, "I am the Great White Planet of the West, and I have come down to earth with an Edict of Amnesty and enlistment from the Jade Emperor to invite you to Heaven to be given office as an Immortal."

"I am very grateful to you, venerable Planet, for condescending to come here," replied Sun Wukong with a smile; then he told his subjects to prepare a feast to entertain the visitor.

"I'm afraid I can't delay," replied the Planet, "as I am carrying a divine edict, so may I ask Your Majesty to come back with me now? We can talk at leisure after your glorious elevation."

"Thank you for coming," said Sun Wukong. "I'm sorry you couldn't take some refreshments before leaving."

Then he called for his four Stalwart Generals and ordered them, "Give my sons and grandsons a thorough training. When I've had a look round in Heaven, I'll take you all to live with me up there." The four Stalwart Generals accepted their orders, and the Monkey King made his cloud carry him up above the clouds. He was Raised to a high
—ranking heavenly office,

Listed among the courtiers in the clouds.

If you don't know what office he was given, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 4

Dissatisfied at Being Appointed Protector of the Horses

Not Content with the Title of Equal of Heaven

The Great White Planet left the depths of the cave with the Handsome Monkey King, and they ascended together on their clouds. As Sun Wukong's somersault cloud was exceptionally fast he reached the Southern Gate of Heaven first, leaving the Great White planet far behind. Just as he was putting away his cloud to go in, his way was barred by the Heavenly Guardian Virudhaka and his powerful heavenly soldiers Liu, Gou, Bi, Chapter 4

Deng, Xin, Zhang, and Tao, who blocked the gate of Heaven with their spears and swords and refused to let him in.

"This old Great White planet is a trickster," said Sun Wukong. "He invited me here, so he has no business to have me kept out with spears and swords." Just as he was kicking up a row the Planet suddenly arrived.

Sun Wukong flung his accusation at him: "Why did you play this trick on me, you old fogy? You told me you came with an Edict of Amnesty from the Jade Emperor to invite me here, so why did you arrange for these people not to let me in through the gate of Heaven?" The Great White Planet laughed.

"Don't be angry, Your Majesty. You've never been here before, your name is not on the books here, and the heavenly soldiers have never met you. Of course they could not let you in just for the asking. But when you've seen His Celestial Majesty and been given office among the Immortals, you will be able to come and go as you wish, and nobody will try to stop you."

"Be that as it may," said Sun Wukong, "I'm not going in." The Great White Planet would not let him go and asked him to go in with him in spite of it all.

As they approached the gate, the Planet shouted, "Heavenly officers of the gates of Heaven, sergeants and soldiers, let us in. This is an Immortal from the lower world, and I am carrying an edict from the Jade Emperor summoning him here." Only then did the Heavenly King Zengzhang and his soldiers withdraw their arms and stand back. Now the Monkey King began to trust the Great White Planet. He walked slowly in with him and looked at the view. Truly it was his

First ascent to the upper world,

Sudden entry into paradise.

Ten thousand beams of golden light shone with a reddish glow;

A thousand strands of propitious vapour puffed out purple mist.

See the Southern Gate of Heaven,

Deep green,

Crystalline,

Shimmering bright,

Studded with jewels.

On either side stood scores of heavenly marshals,

Tall as the roofbeams, next to the pillars,

Holding metal – tipped bows and banners.

All around stood gods in golden armour,

Brandishing their clubs and halberds,

Wielding their cutlasses and swords.

The outside was remarkable enough,

But the inside astonished him.

Here were several mighty pillars,

Round which coiled tawny – bearded dragons, their gold scales gleaming in the sun.

There were long bridges,

Where strutted phoenixes, brilliant of plumage and with bright red crests.

A rosy glow shone with heavenly light;

Thick green mists obscured the Pole Star.

In this heaven there are thirty – three heavenly palaces:

The Palace of Clouds Dispersed, the Vaisravana Palace, the palace of Five Lores, the Sun Palace, the Palace of Flowery Bliss,

Every palace had golden animals on its roof.

Then there were seventy – two precious halls:

The Hall of Morning Audience, the Hall of Rising into Space, the Precious Light Hall, the Hall of the Heavenly Kings, the Hall of the Master of Miracles,

Jade unicorns on every column.

On the Terrace of the Star of Longevity

Grew flowers that never wither.

Beside the Stove for Decocting Elixir,

Were herbs that stay green for ever.

In front of the Facing the Sage pavilion

Crimson gauze clothes Glittered like stars;

Lotus hats

Shone with gold and jade.

Chapter 4

Journey to the West

Jade hairpins and pearl—sewn shoes,

Golden seals on purple cords.

As the golden bell tolled,

The three classes of divinities approached the steps and submitted memorials.

As the heavenly drum was beaten,

Ten thousand sage kings attended the Jade Emperor.

Then they entered the Hall of Miraculous Mist,

Where jade doors were studded with gold,

And phoenixes danced before the crimson gates.

Winding arcades,

Everywhere carved in openwork;

Layer on Layer of eaves,

With dragons and phoenixes soaring.

On top was a majestically purple,

Bright,

Perfectly round,

And dazzling

Golden gourd—shaped finial;

Below, fans hung from the hands of heavenly consorts,

While jade maidens proffered magic clothes.

Ferocious

The heavenly generals guarding the court;

Majestic

The immortal officials protecting the throne.

In the middle were set Crystal dishes

Filled to overflowing with Great Monad Pills;

Agate jars

In which stood twisted coral trees.

All the wonderful things in Heaven were there,

None of which are seen on Earth:

Golden gates, silver chariots, and a purple palace;

Precious plants, jade flowers, and jasper petals.

The jade hares of the princes at court ran past the alter;

The golden rooks of the sages present flew down low.

The Monkey King was fated to come to Heaven,

Rather than be sullied by the mortal world.

The Great White Planet led the Handsome Monkey King to the outside of the Hall of Miraculous Mist. He went straight in to the imperial presence without waiting to be summoned, and did obeisance to the throne.

Sun Wukong stood bolt upright beside him, not bothering with any court etiquette, but just concentrating on listening to the Great White Planet make his report to the Jade Emperor: "In obedience to the Divine Edict, your subject has brought the demon Immortal here."

The Jade Emperor lowered his curtain and asked, "And which of you is the demon Immortal?"

"Me," replied Sun Wukong, only now making a slight bow.

The faces of the officials went white with horror as they exclaimed,

"What a savage monkey! He has the impudence to answer 'Me,' and without even prostrating himself first! He must die!"

In reply to this the Jade Emperor announced, "Sun Wukong is a demon Immortal of the lower world who has only just obtained human form, so he is not acquainted with court procedure. We shall forgive him this time."

"We thank you for your mercy," said the immortal ministers. Only then did Sun Wukong express his respect by bowing low and chanting "na－a－aw" at the top of his voice. The Jade Emperor ordered his immortal civil and military officials to find a vacancy in some department for Sun Wukong.

The Star Lord Wuqu stepped forward form the side and reported, "There are no vacancies in any of the palaces, halls, and departments of Heaven except for a superintendent in the Imperial Stables."

"Then make him Protector of the Horses," ordered the Jade Emperor. All the ministers thanked him for his mercy, apart from Sun Wukong, who just expressed his respect with a loud "na－a－aw." The Jade Emperor then told the Wood Planet to take him to the Imperial Stables.

Chapter 4

50

Journey to the West

The Wood Planet accompanied the delighted Monkey King to his post and then went back to the palace. The Monkey King then called together the deputy and the assistant superintendent, the book－keeper, the grooms, and all the other officials, high and low, to find out about the duties of his department. He found that he had to look after a thousand heavenly horses:

Chestnuts and stallions,

Courser and chargers:

Dragon and Purple Swallow,

Pegasus and Sushun,

Jueti and Silver,

Yaoniao and Flying Yellow,

Taotu and Feathers,

Red Hare and Faster Than Light,

Dazzler and Horizon,

Mist – soarer and Victory;

Wind – chaser and Matchless,

Flying Wing and Galloping Mist,

Lazy Whirlwind and Red Lightning,

Bronze Cup and Drifting Cloud,

Skewbald and Tiger – Stripe,

Dustfree and Purple Scales,

The Four Ferghana Steeds,

The Eight Chargers and Nine Gallopers,

Coursers that can cover three hundred miles – –

All these fine horses were

Neighing in the wind, chasing the lightning, mighty in spirit; Pawing the mist, climbing the clouds, great in their strength.

Chapter 4

51

Journey to the West

The Monkey King looked through the register and counted the horses. In the stables the book – keeper was responsible for ordering the fodder, the head groom was in charge of currying the horses, chopping up and cooking the fodder, and giving them water; the deputy superintendent and his assistant helped to oversee the work. The Protector of the Horses looked after his charges, sleeping neither by day nor by night. It is true that he fooled around by day, but at night he looked after the animals with great diligence, waking them

up and making them eat whenever they fell asleep, and leading those still on their feet to the trough. At the sight of him the heavenly horses would prick up their ears and paw the ground, and they became fat and plump. Thus more than half a month slipped by.

On one morning that was a holiday all the officials of the stables held a feast both to welcome and congratulate the Protector of the Horses.

In the middle of the party the Monkey King suddenly put down his cup and asked, "What sort of office is this

'Protector of the Horses?'"

"What the name suggests, that's all."

"Which official grading does it carry?"

"Unclassified."

"What does 'unclassified' mean?"

"Bottom grade," the others replied, going on to explain, "It is a very low and unimportant office, and all you can do in it is look after the horses. Even someone who works as conscientiously as Your Honour and gets the horses so fat will get no more reward than someone saying 'good'; and if anything goes at all wrong you will be held responsible, and if the losses are serious you will be fined and punished."

The Monkey King flared up on hearing this, gnashed his teeth, and said in a great rage, "How dare they treat me with such contempt? On the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit I am a king and a patriarch. How dare he trick me into coming here to feed his horses for him? It's a low job for youngsters, not for me. I won't do it, I won't.

I'm going back." He pushed the table over with a crash, took his treasure out of his ear, and shook it. It became as thick as a rice bowl, and he brandished it as he charged out of the Imperial Stables to the Southern Gate of Heaven. As the celestial guards knew that his name was on the register of immortal officials they did not dare to block his path, but let him out through the gate.

He descended by cloud and was back on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in an instant. Seeing the four Stalwart Generals and all the kings of the monsters drilling their troops there he shouted in a shrill voice,

"Children, I'm back." The monkeys all bowed to him, took him into the heart of the cave, and asked him to sit on his throne, while they prepared a banquet to welcome him back.

"Congratulations, Your Majesty," they all said. "After over a dozen years up there you must be coming back in glory and triumph."

"What do you mean, over a dozen years?" asked the Monkey King. "I've only been away for a fortnight or so."

"Your Majesty can't have noticed the time passing in heaven. A day in heaven lasts as long as a year on earth.

May we ask what office you held?"

Chapter 4

"It hurts me to tell you," replied the Monkey King with a wave of his hand. "I feel thoroughly humiliated.

That Jade Emperor doesn't know how to use a good man. A man like me – –'Protector of the Horses'. That meant I had to feed his animals for him and wasn't even given an official grading. I didn't know this at first, so I fooled around in the Imperial Stables until today, when I found out from my colleagues how low the job was. I was so angry that I pushed the table over and quit the job. That's why I've come back."

"Quite right too," the other monkeys said. "Your Majesty can be king in our cave paradise and enjoy as much honour and pleasure as you like, so why go and be his groom?" Then they gave orders for wine to be brought at once to cheer their king up.

As they were drinking someone came in to report, "Your Majesty, there are two Single – horned Devil Kings outside who want to see you."

"Ask them in," said the Monkey King, and the two formally – dressed devil kings hurried into the cave and prostrated themselves.

"Why have you come to see me?" asked the Handsome Monkey King; and they replied, "We have long heard that Your Majesty is looking for

men of talent, but we were unable to see you before. Now that Your Majesty has been given heavenly office and come back in triumph, we would like to offer you this yellow robe as a token of our congratulations. We also hope that you will not reject us although we are low and worthless, but will accept our humble services." An exultant Monkey King put on the yellow robe and his happy subjects bowed to him in order of precedence. The two devil kings were appointed Commanders of the Van, and when they had thanked the Monkey King for this they asked, "What office did Your Majesty hold while you were all that time in Heaven?"

"The Jade Emperor has no respect for talent," replied the Monkey King. "He made me something called

'Protector of the Horses.'"

"Your Majesty has such miraculous powers: you should never have been feeding his horses for him. You should have been made a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' shouldn't you?" The Monkey King was beside himself with delight at this suggestion, and he kept saying how splendid it was.

"Get me a banner made at once with the words 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven' in big letters on it, and put up a pole to hang it from," he ordered his four Stalwart Generals. "From now on I am to be called 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' not 'Your Majesty' or 'King'. Pass this order on to all the other kings of the monsters." We will leave him at this point.

When the Jade Emperor held his morning court the next day the Heavenly Teacher Zhang led the deputy and assistant superintendents of the Imperial Stables to the vermilion steps, bowed low, and reported, "Your Majesty, Sun Wukong, the new Protector of the Horses, left Heaven yesterday because he thought his office was too humble."

Just as he was speaking the Heavenly Guardian Virudhaka came from the Southern Gate of Heaven with his heavenly soldiers and reported, "The Protector of the Horses has gone out through the gate. We do not know why."

On hearing this the Jade Emperor commanded, "Let the two divine officials return to their posts; we shall send heavenly soldiers to capture this devil."

Chapter 4

The pagoda–bearing Heavenly King Li Jing and Prince Nezha stepped forward from the ranks of those attending the audience, and they memorialized, "Your Imperial Majesty, we beg you to command us, your incompetent servants, to subdue this fiend." The Emperor was delighted with this suggestion, and he appointed the Pagoda–bearing Heavenly King as Demon quelling High Marshal, and Prince Nezha as Great God of the Seas. He told them to take their forces down to the lower world at once.

Heavenly King Li and Nezha kowtowed, took their leave, went straight back to their own palace, and assembled their troops, commanders and officers. They put the Mighty Miracle God in charge of the vanguard, and General Fishbelly in command of the rear, while General Yaksa was made adjutant. Within an instant they were outside the Southern Gate of Heaven, and they went straight to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. They chose a piece of level and open ground on which to construct a fortified camp, and ordered the Mighty Miracle God to issue the challenge to battle. On receiving this order the Mighty Miracle God tied on his armour firmly and went to the Water Curtain Cave, holding his flower–spreading battle–axe. When he got there he saw huge numbers of devils– –wolves, tigers and leopards– –wielding spears, brandishing swords, leaping around, fighting each other, and making a great noise outside the little entrance to the cave.

"Accursed beasts," shouted the Mighty Miracle God, "tell the Protector of the Horses at once that I am a heavenly general come on the orders of the Jade Emperor to subdue him. If you make him come out and surrender immediately it will save the lot of you from being wiped out."

The devils went rushing into the cave and reported, "Disaster, disaster."

"What disaster?" the Monkey King asked.

"There's a heavenly general outside who says he's come on the orders of the Jade Emperor to subdue you. If you go out and surrender immediately, he says he'll spare our lives."

"Fetch me my armour," said the Monkey King. He then donned his golden helmet, tied on his golden armour, put on his cloud–walking shoes, and took his As–You–Will gold–banded cudgel in his hand.

He led his troops out of the cave and drew them up in battle array. The Mighty Miracle God gazed wide – eyed at the excellent Monkey King:

On his body was gleaming golden armour,

On his head a dazzling golden helmet,

In his hand a gold – banded club,

On his feet a pair of cloud – walking shoes to match.

His devil eyes shone like stars,

His ears were long and hard.

His sturdy frame could be transformed at will,

His voice rang clearly as a bell.

The sharp – mouthed Horse Protector with protruding teeth

Wanted to become a Sage Equaling Heaven.

The Mighty Miracle God shouted in a harsh voice, "Insolent ape! Don't you recognize me?"

The Great Sage Sun Wukong replied at once, "I've never met you before. How should I know which wretched little deity you are? Tell me your name at once."

"I'll get you, you conceited baboon. So you don't know who I am? I am the Heavenly General Mighty Miracle, the commander of the vanguard for Heavenly King Li, the Pagoda – bearer. I have come here on the orders of the Jade Emperor to accept your surrender. Take off your armour at once and submit to the mercy of Heaven, or I'll wipe out every animal on the mountain. And if you so much as hint at a refusal, I'll smash you to powder."

"Stop talking so big, you lousy god," retorted the furious Monkey King, "and give that long tongue of yours a rest. I'd just love to kill you with

this cudgel of mine, but if I did there'd be no one to deliver my message for me, so I'll spare your life. Hurry back to Heaven and tell that Jade Emperor that he doesn't know how to use a good man. Why did he make me waste my infinite powers on feeding his horses for him? Take a look at what's written on my standard. If he's willing to give me this title officially, I'll call off my troops and let Heaven and Earth continue in peace; but if he refuses I'm coming up to the Hall of Miraculous Mist to knock him off his dragon throne." When the Mighty Miracle God heard this he looked hard and saw that a tall pole had been planted outside the entrance to the cave, on which hung a banner reading GREAT SAGE

EQUALING HEAVEN.

"Heh, heh, heh," he mocked, "you ignorant ape. What shameless effrontery, to want to be a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven!' Take that!" He swung with his battle – axe at the Monkey King who, quite unflustered, parried with his gold banded cudgel. It was a fine battle:

The cudgel was called As – You – Will,

The axe was named Flower Spreader.

As soon as the two met,

You could not tell which was better:

Axe and club

Locked together.

One was concealing his magic powers,

One was a big – mouthed boaster.

They used their magic

To breathe out cloud and mist;

When they opened their hands

They scattered sand and dust.

The heavenly general was a master of magic;

Endless were the changes the Monkey King could make.

When the cudgel was raised it was like a dragon playing in the water;
As the axe came down it was a phoenix among the flowers.

Although the fame of Miracle was known throughout the world,

His skill was no match for his enemy.

If the Great Sage lightly twirled his club,

A mere touch would paralyze.

The Mighty Miracle God was no match for his opponent. He hastened to block the Monkey King's first blow with his axe, which broke in two with a crunch. He fled for his life as fast as he could, and the Monkey King said mockingly, "You bag of pus, I'll spare you this time. Hurry back with my message, and look sharp about it."

The Mighty Miracle God returned to his camp, went straight to the Pagoda – bearing Heavenly King Li Jing, knelt before him, and said with an awkward laugh, "The Protector of the Horses has really tremendous magic powers. I was no match for him. He beat me, and now I have come to take my punishment."

"This fool has ruined our morale," exploded the Heavenly King Li in a fury. "Take him away, and off with his head."

Prince Nezha, who was standing to one side, stepped forward, bowed, and said, "Do not be angry, Your Majesty. Forgive the Mighty Miracle God, and let me go and do battle; then we'll see who's boss." The heavenly king accepted his advice, and told Mighty Miracle God to go back and look after the camp while he awaited his punishment.

When he had put on his armour and helmet, Prince Nezha charged straight out of the camp to the Water Curtain Cave. Sun Wukong, who was just going to pull back his troops, saw the ferocity of his onslaught.

What a fine prince he was:

His hair in tufts barely covers his scalp,

His cloak not over his shoulders.

How striking his intelligence,

How elegant his air.

Indeed he is the scion of a unicorn in Heaven;

In truth he is a phoenix Immortal from the clouds.

The seed of dragons is different from the common herd;

This fine youth is not at all like mortals.

With him he carries six divine weapons;

Endless his transformations as he soars through the air.

Now he has received an edict from the Jade Emperor's mouth,

Making him Commander of the Three Temples of the Masses.

Sun Wukong went up to him and asked, "Whose little boy are you then? What do you mean, charging up to my door?"

"Stinking monkey fiend," shouted Prince Nezha, "don't you know who I am? I am Nezha, the third son of the pagoda–bearing Heavenly King, and I have been commanded by the Jade Emperor to come here and arrest you."

"You do talk big, don't you, little prince," said Sun Wukong, laughing at him. "But as you've still got all your milk teeth and are still wet behind the ears I'll spare your life and I won't hit you. Do you see what it says on my standard? Go and tell the Jade Emperor that if he gives me that title I'll call off my armies and submit to him once more. But if he doesn't do what I want him to, I'll surely attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist." Nezha looked up and saw the words "Great Sage Equaling Heaven."

"You wicked monkey! How dare you give yourself a title like that, whatever your magic powers may be!

Don't worry, all you're getting is my sword."

"Give me a few swipes, then," replied Sun Wukong, "I won't move."

"Change," yelled Nezha in a passion, and at once he had three heads and six arms, which made him look most ferocious. In his hands he held six weapons, a demon – beheading sword, a demon – hacking cutlass, a demon – binding rope, a demon – quelling pestle, an embroidered ball, and a fire – wheel – – and wielding all these he rushed straight at Sun Wukong.

At the sight of him Sun Wukong exclaimed with astonishment, "Well, my boy, you certainly know a trick or two. But just behave yourself and watch what I can do." Our dear Great Sage shouted "Change," and he too had three heads and six arms. He shook his gold – banded cudgel, and it turned into three cudgels, which he gripped with his six hands to ward off Nezha's blows. It was a great fight, and it made the earth shake and the mountains tremble:

Chapter 4

57

Journey to the West

Six – armed Prince Nezha

Heaven – born Monkey King:

Well – matched opponents,

Both in the same class.

One sent down to the lower world on a mission,

The other priding himself as a fighting bull.

Fast moves the point of the demon – beheading sword,

And evil spirits fear the demon – hacking cutlass,

The demon – binding rope flies like a dragon,

While the demon – quelling pestle has the head of a wolf,

The fire – wheel flashes with lightning,

And the embroidered ball shoots everywhere.

The Great Sage's three As – You – Will cudgels

Block and parry with consummate skill.

Though many hard – fought rounds prove inconclusive,

The prince refuses to call the battle off;

Making his six weapons multiply in number,

He throws them in their millions at the Monkey King's head,

But the Monkey King, fearless, roars with laughter

As his iron clubs whirl and think for themselves.

One becomes a thousand; one thousand, ten;

Their wild dance fills the sky as if with dragons.

All the demon kings shut their gates in terror;

Every goblin on the mountain finds some place to hide.

Cloud – black, the anger of the heavenly troops;

Whistling like the wind, the gold – banded cudgels.

Chapter 4

58

Journey to the West

On the one side,

The blood – curdling war – cries of the heavenly host.

On the other,

The spine – chilling banners of the monkey fiends.

Both parties are equal in fighting courage;

Neither could be said to be the winner.

Prince Nezha and Sun Wukong both used their divine powers to the full as they fought thirty rounds. When the six weapons of the prince turned into thousands and tens of thousands, so did Sun Wukong's gold–banded cudgel. The air was filled as if with drops of rain or shooting stars, and there was no way of telling who was winning. As Sun Wukong was deft of hand and quick of eye, he plucked one of the hairs from his body in the midst of the fray and shouted "Change!" It changed into his own double to mislead Nezha while his real self leapt round till he was behind Nezha and struck at his left shoulder. Nezha was in the middle of performing a spell when he heard the whistle of the cudgel through the air and twisted away as fast as he could. But he was unable to avoid the blow and had to flee wounded. He brought his magic to an end, put his six weapons away, reverted to his true appearance, and abandoned the field of battle in defeat.

This had all been observed by Heavenly King Li, who was on the point of sending reinforcements when his son appeared before him and reported in fear and trembling, "Father, the Protector of the Horses is very powerful. My magic was outclassed and he has wounded me in the shoulder."

The color drained from the face of the horror–struck Heavenly King as he said, "If the creature has magic powers like that, how are we going to defeat him?"

"Outside the gates of the cave," the prince went on to report, "there is a banner on a pole that reads 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven'. He bragged that if the Jade Emperor gave him this title he would call everything off; otherwise he said he would attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist."

"In that case," said the Heavenly King, "we'll disengage now, go back to Heaven, and request that more heavenly troops be sent to capture this wretch. There is plenty of time." The prince, in pain and unable to go on fighting, went back to Heaven with the Heavenly King and put in this request, but of that no more for the moment.

Watch as the Monkey King returns to the mountain in triumph to receive the congratulations of the seventy–two kings of the monsters and his six sworn brothers. There was great drinking and singing in the cave paradise. Sun Wukong said to his six sworn brothers, "As I've called myself Great Sage Equaling Heaven, you can all call yourselves great sages too."

"Honorable brother, you're right," roared the Bull Demon King. "I shall

call myself the Great Sage Matching Heaven."

"I'll be the Great Sage Overturning the Sea," said the Salamander Demon King.

"I'll be the Great Sage Throwing Heaven into Confusion," said the Roc Demon King.

Chapter 4

59

Journey to the West

"I'll be the Great Sage Who Moves Mountains," said the Camel Demon King.

"I'll be the Great Sage Who Travels with the Wind," said the Macaque King.

"And I'll be the Great Sage Who Drives Away Gods," said the Lion King. The seven great sages then did just as they pleased and gave themselves the titles they chose, and after enjoying themselves all day they went home.

Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha led their forces straight to the Palace of Miraculous Mist and made this request: "We, your subjects, took our forces down to the lower world, under your Divine Edict, to subdue the immortal fiend Sun Wukong. But to our surprise we found that his magical powers were too far—reaching for us to be able to defeat him. We therefore hope that Your Imperial Majesty will send more troops to exterminate him."

"How could a mere monkey goblin have such great powers that you actually need more troops?" asked the Jade Emperor.

Prince Nezha then came forward and memorialized, "We beg Your Majesty to spare us the deaths we deserve.

That monkey fiend has an iron cudgel that he used to defeat the Mighty Miracle God and wounded me on the shoulder. He has set a banner up outside the entrance to his cave that reads 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' and he says that if you give him this office he will stop fighting and submit; otherwise he will attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist."

When the Jade Emperor heard this he asked in horror, "How dare that monkey fiend talk so wildly? Send all the generals to execute him at once."

As he spoke the Great White Planet stepped forward from the ranks of officials. "That monkey fiend knows how to talk," he suggested, "but he has no idea about real power. If more soldiers were sent to fight him, they might not be able to overcome him at once and their energies would be wasted. But if Your Imperial Majesty were to show your great mercy, you could send down a pacificatory amnesty and let him be a Great Sage Equaling Heaven. It would only be an empty title that he was given, just an honorary appointment."

"What do you mean by an honorary appointment?" asked the Jade Emperor.

"He would be called a Great Sage Equaling Heaven, but he would not be given any responsibility or paid any salary. He would be kept between Heaven and Earth, where his evil nature would be under control and he would be kept from wickedness. Thus Heaven and Earth can be at peace, while sea and sky enjoy tranquillity." The Jade Emperor approved this suggestion and ordered that a new edict should be issued for the Great White Planet to deliver.

The Great White Planet left once more through the Southern Gate of Heaven and went straight to have a look at the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. It was quite different from before. There was an awe–inspiring and spine–chilling atmosphere, and every kind of fiend was present. They were roaring and leaping around with their swords, spears, cutlasses and staves. As soon as they saw the Great White Planet they all went for him.

"Will your commander please come forward," said the Planet. "I would trouble you to inform your Great Sage that I am a heavenly envoy sent by the Jade Emperor, and I am carrying a divine edict with an invitation for him."

The fiends rushed in to report, "There's an old man outside who says he's come from Heaven with an edict of invitation for you."

When Sun Wukong heard this he said, "I'm glad he's come. I expect he's that Great White Planet who came before. Although I wasn't given a decent job last time I went to Heaven, I did get up there and learn my way around. If it's him again, his intentions must be good." He told his commanders to put on a big display of banners and drums and to turn out a guard of honour to welcome him.

Then the Great Sage, wearing his helmet, his yellow robe over his armour, and his cloud–walking shoes, hurried out of the cave at the head of his monkey host, bowed in greeting, and shouted in a loud voice, "Please come in, venerable Planet. Forgive me for not being here to welcome you."

The Planet walked straight into the cave, stood facing the South and said, "Great Sage, when you left the Imperial Stables because you found the post too humble, the officials of that department naturally reported the matter to the Jade Emperor. The Jade Emperor decreed that all officials have to work their way up from the bottom, and asked why you objected to its being humble. After this Heavenly King Li took Nezha down to the lower world to do battle with you. Your divine powers, Great Sage, were more than they expected, and they suffered defeat. On their return to Heaven they reported that you had set up a banner and wanted to be a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven'. All the generals wanted to punish you; but I, Great Sage, ran the risk of punishment by suggesting that the armies should not be called out, and that Your Majesty should be given a post instead.

The Jade Emperor approved my memorial, and that is why I have come here to invite you."

"I am most grateful for this honour after the trouble I caused you earlier," replied Sun Wukong, "but I am not sure whether there is such a title as 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven' in the upper world."

"After obtaining imperial approval for this title," said the Planet, "I came down bearing a decree. If anything goes wrong, I'll bear the responsibility."

A highly delighted Sun Wukong tried his hardest to persuade the Planet to stay to a banquet, but without success, so he went with him by propitious cloud to the Southern Gate of Heaven. The heavenly generals and soldiers all greeted them with respectfully folded arms, and they went straight to the Hall of Miraculous Mist.

The Great White Planet did obeisance and said, "In obedience to the

imperial edict your subject has summoned Sun Wukong, the Protector of the Horses, and he is present."

"Let Sun Wukong come forward," said the Jade Emperor. "We do now proclaim you Great Sage Equaling Heaven. Your rank is now very high. Let there be no more mischief from you." The monkey simply chanted

"na – a – aw" to express his thanks to the Emperor. The Jade Emperor then ordered the two officials in charge of public works, Zhang and Lu, to build a residence for the Great Sage Equaling Heaven to the left of the Peach Orchard. In the residence there were to be two offices: a Tranquillity Office and a Calm Divinity Office. Both these offices were to have immortal clerks and senior and junior assistants. He then told the Star Lords of the Constellation Five to escort Sun Wukong to his post, and in addition gave him two bottles of imperial wine and ten golden flowers, and admonished him to settle down and keep out of mischief. The Monkey King accepted the order and went that same day with the Star Lords of the Constellation Five to his residence, where he opened the bottles of wine and drained them dry with the help of all present. He then saw the star officials off and returned to his own palace. From then on he lived in happiness and content, and enjoyed untrammelled pleasure in the Palace. Truly,

His immortal name was for ever inscribed in the register of eternal life, Chapter 4

To be transmitted for ten thousand ages, free of the wheel of rebirth.

If you don't know what happened next, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 5

After Chaos Among the Peaches the Great Sage Steals the Pills

In the Revolt Against Heaven the Gods Capture the Demons

The story goes on to relate that the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, a mere monkey devil after all, was quite satisfied that his name was on the register of office without caring about the grading of his job and his own rank, or the size of his salary. The immortal clerks in the two

offices in his residence were in constant attendance on him, he had three meals a day and a bed to sleep on at night, and he lived a free and easy life without worries. In his spare time he would visit the other palaces, get together with his old friends, and make new ones. When he saw the Three Pure Ones, he would address them as "venerable," and when he met the Four Emperors he called them "Your Majesty." He was on fraternal terms with the Nine Bright Shiners, the Generals of the Five Regions, the Twenty－Eight Constellations, the Four Great Heavenly Kings, the Gods of the Twelve Branches, the Five Ancients of the Five Regions, the star ministers of the whole sky, and the countless gods of the Milky Way. Today he would wander East, and tomorrow he would go West, coming and going by cloud, and never staying anywhere for long.

When the Jade Emperor was holding his morning court one day the Immortal Xu of Jingyang came forward from the body of officials, kowtowed, and suggested, "The Great Sage Equaling Heaven is spending his time in idle travel, and is making the acquaintance of all the stars in the sky, calling them all his friends irrespective of their rank. It would be as well to give him some responsibility, and prevent his idleness leading to trouble later on."

The Jade Emperor's response to this suggestion was to send for the Monkey King at once. He came in a cheerful mood and asked, "What promotion and reward have you summoned me here to receive, Your Majesty?"

"Seeing that you are idle and have nothing to do," replied the Jade Emperor, "we are giving you a job. You are to administer the Peach Orchard, and you will give it your attention day and night." The Great Sage was overjoyed, and after expressing his thanks and chanting "na－a－aw" he withdrew.

In his eagerness to be at work he went straight to the Peach Orchard to have a look round. When he got there he was stopped by a local tutelary god who asked him, "Where are you going, Great Sage?"

"I've been put in charge of the Peach Orchard by the Jade Emperor, and I've come to inspect it." The local god hastened to greet him formally, and he called the men who weeded, brought water, looked after the trees, and swept the grounds to come and kowtow to the Great Sage. When Sun Wukong was taken inside this is what he saw:

Charming,

Every tree.

Charming and luxuriant the full blossom;

Every tree weighed down with fruit.

The fruit – laden branches bend like carding – bows;

The blossoming trees are covered with powder and rouge.

Always blossoming, always in fruit, they are ripe for a thousand years;
They know no summer or winter, but linger for ever.

The early ripeners

Look red – faced and tipsy;

The ones still growing

Are green in stalk and skin.

When the dew forms, their flesh has a touch of blue,

While the sun picks out their vermilion beauty.

Below the trees exotic flowers grow,

Bright and unfading throughout the year.

On either side stand towers and pavilions,

And a rainbow always arches the sky.

These are not the common breeds of the Dark Earth Capital,

But are tended by the Queen Mother of the Jade Pool.

After taking a good look at this the Great Sage asked the local god, "How many of these trees are there?"

"Three thousand six hundred all together," the local god replied. "The ones growing at the front have tiny blossoms and small fruits, and

they ripen every three thousand years. Anyone who eats them becomes an Immortal and understands the Way, and his body becomes both light and strong. The twelve hundred in the middle have multiple blossoms and sweet fruits, and ripen every six thousand years; whoever eats them can fly and enjoy eternal youth. The back twelve hundred are streaked with purple and have pale yellow stones.

They ripen once every nine thousand years, and anyone who eats them becomes as eternal as Heaven and Earth, as long – lived as the Sun and Moon." The Great Sage was beside himself with joy on learning this, and that day he checked the number of the trees and looked over the buildings in the orchard before going back to his residence. From then on he went to admire them every three or four days. He dropped his friends, and Chapter 5

made no more pleasure jaunts.

One day he noticed that the peaches near the end of the branches of one old tree were all but ripe, and he felt like trying one; but as the local god, the workmen, and the immortal clerks from his residence were close on his heels it was impossible. Suddenly he had an idea, and he said, "Go and wait for me outside the gates while I take a nap in this summer – house."

All the Immortals thereupon withdrew, and the Monkey King took off his official hat and clothes, climbed one of the bigger trees, and chose some large, ripe peaches. When he had picked a good number he sat at his ease in the branches and ate his fill of them, then jumped down from the tree, pinned on his hat, put on his clothes, and shouted for all his attendants to go back to his residence with him. Two or three days later he thought of another trick to steal some more peaches, and he ate his fill of them.

One day the Queen Mother arranged a banquet, opening many precious pavilions for a feast of peaches by the Jade Pool. She sent the Red Fairy, the Blue Fairy, the White Fairy, the Black Fairy, the Purple Fairy, the Yellow Fairy, and the Green Fairy to the Peach Orchard with their baskets to pick peaches for the feast. The seven fairies went straight to the orchard gates, the workmen of the orchard and the immortal superintendents of the two offices of the Equaling Heaven Residence were guarding the gate.

The fairies went up to them and said, "We have come on the orders of the Queen Mother to pick peaches for a feast."

"Wait a moment please, Immortal Beauties," said the local god. "Things are different this year. The Jade Emperor has appointed the Great Sage Equaling Heaven to be the guardian of this orchard, and we must ask him before we can open the orchard to you."

"Where is the Great Sage?" the fairies asked, and the local god replied, "Inside the orchard. As he was feeling tired he is having a nap by himself in a summerhouse."

"In that case, please find him without delay," requested the fairies, and the local god took them into the orchard. But all they could find of him in the summerhouse were his hat and clothes. They had no idea where he could have gone, and looked everywhere without success. The Great Sage had in fact made himself only two inches long after eating some of the peaches for fun, and he was sleeping under a large leaf at the top of one of the big trees.

"We have come by decree, and we can't go back empty – handed, although the Great Sage is nowhere to be found," said the fairies.

One of the immortal superintendents who was standing nearby replied, "As you Immortal Beauties have come by order of the Queen Mother, we must not delay you. Our Great Sage is always wandering off, so I expect that he has gone away to visit some of his friends. You had better pick the peaches; it will be all right if we inform him."

The fairies did as he suggested and went into the orchard to pick peaches. First they filled two baskets from the trees in front, and then they picked three basketfuls from the trees in the middle; but when they came to the trees at the back, they saw that peaches and blossoms were few and far between. Only a few unripe fruits with furry stalks and green skins were left. All the ripe ones had been eaten up by the Monkey King. The seven fairies looked everywhere, but all they could see was a single red and white peach on a Southern branch. The Blue Fairy pulled the branch down, the Red Fairy picked the peach, and then they let the branch go again. This woke up the Great Sage, who had changed himself into this peach to take a nap on this branch.

Chapter 5

He resumed his own form, took his gold–banded cudgel from his ear, shook it till it was as thick as a ricebowl, and shouted at them, "Where are you from, you thieving fiends?" The seven fairies fell on their knees in confusion.

"Please don't be angry with us, Great Sage. We're not fiends but seven fairies sent by Her Majesty the Queen Mother of the West to pick peaches of immortality and open the precious halls here for a Feast of Peaches.

When we arrived here we saw the local god and other deities of the place, but we could not find you, Great Sage. We could not delay carrying out the Queen Mother's orders, so we went ahead and picked the peaches without waiting for you, Great Sage. We very much hope that you will forgive us."

These words turned the Great Sage's bad mood into a good one, and he said, "Please rise, Fairy Beauties. Who is the Queen Mother inviting to this feast?"

"There are old rules about who attends: The Buddha of the Western Heaven, Bodhisattvas, holy monks, Arhats, the Guanyin of the South Pole, the Merciful and Sage Emperor of the East, the Venerable Immortals of the Ten Continents and the Three Islands, the Mystic Divinity of the North Pole, and the Great Yellow–horned Immortal of the Yellow Pole at the Centre. These make up the Five Venerable Ones of the Five Regions. There will also be the Star Lords of the Five Constellation; the Three Pure Ones, the Four Emperors and the Heavenly Immortal of the Great Monad from the Eight High Caves; the Jade Emperor, the immortals of the Nine Mounds, and the gods of the Seas and Mountains and the Ruler of the Nether World from the Eight Lower Caves; and the terrestrial deities. All the major and minor gods of all the halls and palaces will come to the Feast of Peaches."

"Will I be invited?" asked the Great Sage with an ingratiating smile.

"Not as far as we've heard," the fairies replied.

"I'm the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, so why shouldn't I be asked?" said the Great Sage.

"That was what happened before: we don't know about this time," the fairies replied.

"You're right," he said. "Just wait here while I go and find out whether I'm invited."

Splendid Great Sage. Making a magic with his hands as he spoke the words of the spell, he said to the fairies,

"Stay where you are! Stay where you are!" As this was an immobilizing spell, the seven fairies were left standing in a daze under the peach tree with their eyes wide open as the Great Sage leapt out of the orchard on a somersault cloud and headed for the Jade Pool. As he traveled he saw that The sky shimmered with auspicious light

As clouds of many colours streamed across it.

The white stork's cry made the heavens shake;

A thousand leaves grew on the purple asphodel.

Amid it all an Immortal appeared,

Carrying himself with heaven – sent elegance,

Chapter 5

65

Journey to the West

As he danced on the rainbow, cloaked by the Milky Way,

With a talisman at his waist to ward off birth and death.

His name was Bare – Foot Immortal,

And he was going to the feast of longevity – giving peaches.

As the Bare – foot Immortal saw him, the Great Sage lowered his head and thought of a plan by which to trick the Immortal and get to the banquet himself.

"Where are you going, reverend sir?" he asked; and the Immortal replied, "I'm going to the Peach Banquet by the invitation of the Queen Mother."

"There is something you do not know, venerable sir," said the Great Sage. "As my somersault cloud is so fast, the Jade Emperor has sent me everywhere to tell all you gentlemen to go to the Hall of Universal

Brightness for a ceremony before going on to the banquet."

As the Immortal was an open and upright man, he took this lie for the truth, but wondered, "The thanksgiving ceremony is usually held by the Jade Pool, so why are we having the ceremony in the Hall of Universal Brightness before going to the Jade Pool for the banquet?" Nevertheless, he turned his propitious cloud around and went to the Hall of Universal Brightness.

As the Great Sage rode his cloud he said a spell, shook himself, took the form of the Bare-foot Immortal, and hurried to the Jade Pool. He reached the pavilion there a moment later, stopped his cloud, and went quietly inside. He saw

Fabulous perfumes coiling,

A confusion of auspicious clouds;

The jade tower set with color,

The precious pavilions scattering mists;

The phoenix soars till almost lost to view,

And jeweled flowers seem to rise and fall.

Above a nine-phoenix screen

A rainbow stool of the eight precious things,

A coloured golden table,

Green jade bowls with a thousand flowers.

On the table were dragon livers and marrow of phoenix bone,

Bears' paws and apes' lips--

A hundred different dishes, and all of them good;

Rare fruits and fine delicacies, every one unique.

Everything was neatly set out, but no Immortals had yet arrived. The Great Sage had not finished looking when he smelt wine; and as he whirled round he saw under a portico to the right several immortal officials in charge of brewing liquor with some workmen who stirred the lees, a number of novices who carried water and some boys who looked after the fires. They were washing the vats and scrubbing the pots, having made jade liquor and a fragrant fermentation of the lees. The Great Sage could not stop himself from drooling, and he longed to drink some, but unfortunately all those people were there. So he performed a spell by pulling several hairs from his body, chewing them up, spitting them up, saying the magic words, and shouting "Change"; whereupon the hairs turned into sleep insects, which flew into the faces of all the liquor–makers. Watch them as their hands go limp, their heads droop, their eyes close, and they drop their symbols of office and all fall asleep. Whereupon the Great Sage grabbed the rare delicacies and exotic foods, then went under the portico and drank from the vats and pots until he was completely drunk.

Only then did he think, "This won't do at all. When the guests come for the banquet they'll be furious with me, and I'll be for it if I'm caught. I'd better get back to the Residence as soon as I can and sleep it off."

Our dear Great Sage staggered and swayed, charging about all over the place under the influence of the liquor, and going the wrong way. He arrived not at the Equaling Heaven Residence but at the Tushita Heavenly Palace. As soon as he saw this he sobered up and said to himself, "The Tushita Palace is the highest of the thirty–three heavens, where Lord Lao Zi of the Great Monad reigns. However did I get here? Never mind, I've always wanted to see that old chap, and I've never managed to come here before. I might as well go and have a look at him now that I'm passing this way."

He straightened his clothes and rushed in, but did not see Lord Lao Zi. There was no sign of anyone. This was because Lao Zi and the Ancient Buddha Dipamkara were expounding the Way from a red dais in a triple–storied pavilion, and all the immortal boys, generals, officials and petty functionaries were standing to right and left listening to the lecture. The Great Sage went straight to the room in which the elixir was kept, and although he could not find Lao Zi there he saw that there was a small fire in the stove beside the range over which pills were made. On either side of the stove were five gourds, full of golden pills of refined elixir.

"This is the Immortals' greatest treasure," he exclaimed in delight. "I've

wanted to refine some of these golden pills to save people with ever since I understood the Way and mastered the principle of the correspondence of the Esoteric and Exoteric, but I've never had time to come here. Today I'm in luck— —I've found them. As Lao Zi isn't here I'll try a few." He emptied the gourds of their contents and ate up all the pills as if he were eating fried beans.

Before long he was full of pills and quite sober. "This is terrible," he thought, "this is a colossal disaster. If the Jade Emperor is shocked by this, I'm done for. I must get out of here. I'd be much better off as a king in the lower world."

He rushed out of the Tushita Palace, avoiding his usual route. Using a spell to make himself invisible, he left by the West Gate of Heaven, and went straight down to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit by cloud. When he Chapter 5

got there he saw flags, banners, spears and halberds gleaming in the sun: the four Stalwart Generals and the seventy—two kings of the monsters were holding military exercises.

"Children, I'm back," shouted the Great Sage in a loud voice, and all the fiends dropped their weapons and fell to their knees.

"You don't care, do you, Great Sage?" they said. "It's been so long since you left us, and you never came back to see us."

"I haven't been long, I haven't been long," protested the Great Sage, and as they talked they walked into the innermost part of the cave. When the four Stalwart General's had tidied the place up and made him sit down, they kowtowed to him and asked, "What office did you hold, Great Sage, during your century and more in Heaven?"

The Great Sage laughed and said, "As far as I can remember it was only six months, so why do you say it was over a century?"

"A day in Heaven is the same as a year on earth," the Stalwart Generals replied.

"I was lucky this time," said the Great Sage. "The Jade Emperor took a liking to me and ennobled me as the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. He had an Equaling Heaven Residence built for me, complete with a

Tranquillity Office and a Calm Divinity Office with Immortal functionaries, attendants and guards. Later on, when he saw that I had nothing to do, he put me in charge of the Peach Orchard. Recently the Queen Mother Goddess gave a Peach Banquet, but she didn't invite me. Instead of waiting for an invitation, I went to the Jade Pool and stole all the immortal food and drink. I staggered away from the Jade Pool and blundered into Lord Lao Zi's palace, and there I ate up his five gourds of pills of immortality. Then I got out through the heavenly gates and came here because I was scared that the Jade Emperor was going to punish me."

All the fiends were delighted with what they heard, and they laid on liquor and fruit with which to welcome him back.

They filled a stone bowl with coconut toddy and handed it to him, but when he tasted it the Great Sage grimaced and said, "It's awful, it's awful."

Two of his Stalwart Generals, Beng and Ba, explained, "You don't find coconut toddy very tasty because you have drunk immortal liquor and eaten immortal food in the heavenly palace, Great Sage. But as the saying goes, 'Sweet or not, it's water from home.'"

To this the Great Sage replied, "And all of you, whether related to me or not, are from my home. When I was enjoying myself beside the Jade Pool today I saw jars and jars of jade liquor under a portico there. As none of you have ever tasted it I'll go and pinch you a few jars; then you can each have a little drink, and live for ever." All the monkeys were beside themselves with glee. The Great Sage then went out of the cave, turned a somersault, made himself invisible, and went straight to the Peach Banquet. As he went through the gates of the Jade Pool he saw that the men who made the wine, stirred the lees, carried the water, and looked after the fire were still snoring away. He tucked two big jars of wine under his arms, took two more in his hands, then turned his cloud round and went back to have a feast of immortal wine with the monkey masses in the cave.

They all drank several cups and were very happy, but we will not go into this.

The story returns to the seven fairies, who were only able to free themselves a whole day after Sun Wukong had immobilized them with his magic. They picked up their baskets and went back to report to the Queen Mother that they were late because the Great Sage Equaling Heaven had held them there by magic.

"How many peaches did you pick?" the Queen Mother asked.

"Two baskets of little ones and three baskets of medium ones. But when we got to the back we could not find a single big one; we think that they were all eaten by the Great Sage. While we were looking for some the Great Sage suddenly appeared, and he beat and tortured us to make us tell him who had been invited to the banquet. After we had told him he immobilized us there, and we don't know where he went. We only came round and freed ourselves a moment ago."

On hearing this the Queen Mother went to see the Jade Emperor and gave him a full account of what had happened. Before she had finished, the liquor－makers arrived with their immortal officials to report that an unknown person had thrown the Grand Peach Banquet into confusion and stolen the jade liquor as well as the precious delicacies of a hundred flavors. Then came Four Heavenly Teachers to announce that the Supreme Patriarch of the Way, Lao Zi, had arrived.

The Jade Emperor went out with the Queen Mother to meet him, and after doing obeisance Lao Zi said, "I had refined some Golden Pills of the Nine Transformations in my palace for a Feast of Elixir Pills with Your Majesty, but a thief has stolen them. This is what I have come to report to Your Majesty." This news made the Jade Emperor tremble with fear.

Not long afterwards the immortal administrators from the Equaling Heaven Residence came to kowtow and report: "The Great Sage Sun Wukong abandoned his post and went wandering off yesterday. He has not come back yet and we do not know where he has gone." The Jade Emperor, now more suspicious than ever, then saw the Bare －Foot Immortal bow his head to the ground.

"Your subject was going to the banquet on a summons from the Queen Mother," he reported, "when I happened to meet the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. He told me, O Lord of Ten Thousand Years, that you had issued a decree ordering him to tell all the rest of us to go to the Hall of Universal Brightness for a ceremony before going to the banquet. Your subject went back to the Hall of Universal Brightness as he had told me to, but as I did not see the Imperial Dragon and Phoenix Chariot outside I hurried here to await orders."

"This wretch has the impudence to invent fraudulent decrees and deceive eminent ministers," exclaimed the Jade Emperor with anger and astonishment. "The Miraculous Investigator is to find out at once what he has been up to."

The Miraculous Investigator left the palace in obedience to the edict, and by making thorough enquiries he found out all the details of what had happened.

"The wrecker of the Heavenly Palace was Sun Wukong," he reported, and he went on to give a full account.

The Jade Emperor was furiously angry, and he ordered the Four Great Heavenly Kings along with Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha to mobilize the Twenty–eight Constellations, the Nine Bright Shiners, the Twelve Gods of the Twelve Branches, the Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions, the Four Duty Gods, the Constellations of the East and West, the Gods of the North and South, the Deities of the Five Mountains and the Four Rivers, the star ministers of all Heaven, and a total of a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers. They were to descend to the lower world with eighteen heaven–and–earth nets, surround the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, and capture that wretch for punishment. The gods called out their troops at once, and left the heavenly palace.

A gusty sandstorm blotted out the heavens,

Chapter 5

69

Journey to the West

Purple fog threw the earth into darkness.

Just because the monkey fiend offended the Supreme Emperor

Heavenly hosts were sent down to the mortal dust.

The Four Great Heavenly Kings,

The Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions.

The Four Great Heavenly Kings held the supreme command,

And the Revealers controlled the soldiers' movements.

Li the Pagoda Carrier commanded the central corps,

Nezha the deadly led the van.

The star Rahu ordered the leading rands,

And the star Ketu towered behind.

The Sun revealed his divinity,

And radiance shone from the Moon.

The stars of the Five Elements were mighty in valour,

And the Nine Bright Shiners were fond of battle.

The stars of the Branches Zi, Wu, Mao and You,

Were all great heavenly warriors.

The Five Plagues and the Five Mountains were drawn up on the East and West, While the Six Ding and Six Jia marched to right and left.

The Dragon Gods of the Four Rivers stood above and below,

And the Twenty—eight Constellations were drawn up in serried ranks: Horn, Gullet, Base, and Chamber were the officers commanding,

Strider, Harvester, Stomach, and Mane wheeled and soared;

Dipper, Ox, Woman, Barrens, Roof, House, and Wall, Heart, Tail, and Winnower——all able stars——

Well, Ghost, Willow, Spread, Whig and Axletree

Wielded their swords and spears, showed forth their power,

Halted their clouds and descended in mists to the mortal world, Pitching camp before the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.

There is a poem that runs:

Many the transformations of the heaven—born Monkey King

Happy in his lair after stealing the pills and wine.

Just because he wrecked the banquet of peaches,

A hundred thousand heavenly troops now spread their nets.

Heavenly King Li gave the order for the heavenly soldiers to pitch camp and throw a watertight cordon round the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. Above and below they spread eighteen heaven—and—earth nets, and the Nine Bright Shiners were sent out to start the battle. They took their soldiers to the outside of the cave, where they saw the monkeys, big and small, leaping and fooling around.

The star officers shouted in harsh voices, "Little goblins, where's that Great Sage of yours? We are gods, sent from the upper world to subdue your mutinous Great Sage. Tell him to surrender at once— ——and if there's so much as a hint of a 'no' from him, we will exterminate every last one of you."

The little monkeys went rushing in to report, "Great Sage, a disaster, a disaster. There are nine evil gods outside who say they've been sent from the upper world to subdue you."

The Great Sage, who was just then sharing the immortal liquor with the seventy—two kings of the monsters and his four Stalwart Generals, paid no attention to the report, saying:

"Today we have wine so today we celebrate:

To hell with what's happening outside the gate."

But before the words were out of his mouth another group of little devils came in. "Those nine evil gods are using foul and provocative language to challenge us to fight," they announced.

"Never mind them," said the Great Sage with a laugh.

Chapter 5

"With verse and wine we're happy today;

Who cares when fame will come our way?"

But before these words were out of his mouth yet another group of devils came rushing in. "Sir, those nine evil gods have smashed the gates and are charging in."

"The stinking gods!" exploded the Great Sage, "What nerve! I never wanted a fight with them, so why should they come here to push us around?" He thereupon ordered the One–horned Monster King to lead the seventy–two monster kings into battle while he followed them with the four Stalwart Generals. The monster king hastily assembled the devil soldiers and sallied forth to meet the enemy. They were all stopped by a charge by the Nine Bright Shiners, who held the head of the iron bridge so that no one could enter or leave.

During the tumult the Great Sage came on the scene, and shouting "Make way!" he raised his iron cudgel, shook it till it was as thick as a bowl and twelve feet long, and struck and parried as he came charging out.

The Nine Bright Shiners, who were no match for him, fell back.

"You reckless Protector of the Horses," they shouted when they were back in the safety of their own position.

"You have committed the most terrible crimes. You stole the peaches and the wine, wrecked the Peach Banquet, and pilfered the immortality pills of Lord Lao Zi. On top of all this you brought some of the immortal liquor you stole back here. Don't you realize that you have piled crime upon crime?" The Great Sage laughed.

"It's true, it's true," he said, "but what are you going to do about it?"

"In obedience to a golden edict of the Jade Emperor," the Nine Bright Shiners replied, "we have led out troops here to subdue you. Submit at once, or else all these creatures of yours will have to pay with their lives. If you refuse, we shall trample this mountain flat and turn your cave upside–down."

"You hairy gods," roared the Great Sage in a fury, "what magic powers have you got to let you talk so big?

Clear off, or I'll give you a taste of my cudgel." The Nine Bright Shiners did a war–dance together, which did not frighten the Handsome Monkey King in the least. He whirled his gold–banded cudgel, parrying to right and left, and fought the Nine Bright Shiners

till their muscles were weak and their strength was gone; then each of them broke ranks and fled, dragging their weapons behind them. They rushed to the command post of the central corps and reported to the Pagoda－Bearing Heavenly King Li that the Monkey King was so ferocious that they had fled from the battlefield, unable to defeat him. Heavenly King Li then sent the Four Heavenly Kings and the Twenty－eight Constellations into battle. The Great Sage, not at all frightened at this, ordered the One－horned Demon King, the seventy－two kings of the monsters, and the four Stalwart Generals to draw up their line of battle outside the gates of the cave. The ensuing melee was really terrifying.

Howling winds,

Dark, sinister clouds.

On one side flags and standards colorfully flying,

On the other side the gleam of spears and halberds.

Chapter 5

72

Journey to the West

Round helmets shine,

Layered armour gleams.

The shining round helmets reflect the sun,

Like silver boulders reaching to the sky;

Gleaming layers of armour are built into a wall

Like a mountain of ice weighing down the earth.

Long－handled swords

Flash through the clouds like lightning;

Paper－white spears

Pierce mists and fogs;

Heaven－shaped halberds,

Tiger – eye chains,

Bristling like a field of hemp;

Bronze swords,

And four – brightness spears

Drawn up like a dense forest.

Bows and crossbows, eagle – feathered arrows,

Short clubs and snaky spears to terrify the soul.

Wielding his single As – You – Will cudgel,

The Great Sage fights against the heavenly gods.

Such is the slaughter that no bird flies over it;

And tigers and wolves flee in terror.

The swirling stones and clouds of sand make everything dark,

The dirt and the dust blot out the heavens.

The clash of arms startles the universe

As the battle strikes awe into gods and demons.

Chapter 5

73

Journey to the West

The battle started in the morning and went on till the sun set behind the mountains in the West. By then the One – horned Demon King and the seventy – two kings of the monsters had all been captured by the heavenly hosts. Only the four Stalwart Generals and the monkeys had got away, and they were now hiding in the innermost recesses of the Water Curtain Cave. The Great Sage's solitary cudgel had fought off the Four Heavenly Kings, Li the Pagoda – bearer and Prince Nezha, who were all in the sky. After the battle had gone on for a long time the Great Sage saw that night was drawing on, so he plucked out one of his hairs, munched it up, spat out the pieces and shouted, "Change!" They changed into thousands of Great Sages, all with gold – banded

cudgels, who forced Prince Nezha and the five Heavenly Kings to withdraw.

After winning this victory the Great Sage put back his hair and hurried back to the cave, where the four Stalwart Generals at once led the monkeys out to kowtow at the head of the iron bridge to welcome him back.

They sobbed three times and then laughed three times.

"Why are you laughing and crying at the sight of me?" the Great Sage asked.

"When we led all the commanders into battle against the heavenly kings this morning," replied the Stalwart Generals, "the seventy-two kings of the monsters and the One-horned Demon King were all captured by the gods, and we had to flee for our lives. That is why we cried. We laughed because you, Great Sage, have come back victorious and unharmed."

To this the Great Sage replied, "Victory and defeat are all the soldier's lot. As the ancients said, 'To kill ten thousand of the enemy you must lose three thousand of your own.' Anyhow, the officers of ours who were captured were all tigers, leopards, wolves, badgers, river-deer, foxes, and raccoon-dogs. Not one of our own kind was even wounded, so there's no need for us to be bothered about it. But although I forced the enemy to withdraw by dividing up my body through magic, they're still encamped at the foot of our mountain, so we'll have to remain on our guard. Meanwhile we must eat a good meal and get a good night's sleep to build up our energy. Tomorrow morning I'll use powerful magic to capture those heavenly generals and avenge our people." After the four Stalwart Generals and the other monkey commanders had drunk several cups of coconut toddy, they went to bed with their worries calmed.

When the four Heavenly Kings had withdrawn their troops and ended the battle, those who had distinguished themselves reported what they had done. Some had captured tigers and leopards, some lions and elephants, and others wolves and raccoon-dogs, but not one single monkey goblin had been taken. Then they built a mighty stockade around their camp. Commanders who had distinguished themselves wee rewarded, and the soldiers who made up the heaven-and-earth nets were ordered to surround the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, holding bells and shouting, ready for a great battle the next day. Every man heard the orders, and they were strictly obeyed. Indeed:

A wicked monkey made chaos, shocking heaven and earth,

So they spread their nets and watched by night and day.

Listen to the next installment to hear how he was dealt with the following morning.

Chapter 5

74

Journey to the West

Chapter 6

Guanyin Comes to the Feast and Asks the Reason Why

The Little Sage Uses His Might to Subdue the Great Sage

We shall leave for the moment the Heavenly Generals making their encirclement and the soundly sleeping Great Sage. The story goes on to tell how the Compassionate and Merciful Miraculous Savior from Suffering, the Bodhisattva Guanyin of Mount Potaraka in the Southern Sea, having been invited by the Queen Mother to the Peach Banquet, went to the precious pavilions at the Jade Pool with her great disciple Huian the Novice.

She found the place deserted and the banquet ruined. The few Immortals present were not sitting at their places but holding confused discussions. When greetings were over the Immortals gave the Bodhisattva an account of what had happened.

"If there is to be no banquet and no drinking," said the Bodhisattva, "you had better all come with me to the Jade Emperor." The Immortals were delighted to follow her, and when they arrived before the Hall of Universal Brightness the Four Heavenly Teachers, the Bare −Foot Immortal and many others were all there to greet the Bodhisattva. They told her that the Jade Emperor had sent heavenly armies to capture the demon, but they had not yet returned.

"I wish to see the Jade Emperor," said the Bodhisattva, "so may I trouble you to inform him on my behalf?"

The heavenly teacher Qui Hongji then went to the Hall of Miraculous Mist, and the Bodhisattva was invited in. She found that Lord Lao Zi was there in the place of honour, and that the Queen Mother was behind him.

The Bodhisattva went in at the head of the others, and when she had done obeisance to the Jade Emperor she greeted Lao Zi and the Queen Mother. After they had all sat down she asked what had happened at the Peach Banquet.

"The banquet is held every year, and it is normally a very happy occasion," the Jade Emperor replied, "but this year that monkey fiend wrecked it, so that your invitation was worth nothing."

"Where does this monkey fiend come from?" asked the Bodhisattva.

"He was born from a stone egg on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in the land of Aolai in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body," the Jade Emperor answered. "When he was born golden beams flashed from his eyes that reached to the star palace. At first we paid no attention to him, but later on he became a spirit, subduing dragons and tigers, and erasing his own name from the registers of death. The Dragon Kings and King Yama of the underworld informed us of this in memorials, and we wanted to capture him, but the Star of Longevity memorialized that in the Three Worlds all beings with nine orifices can become Immortals. We therefore extended education to the worthy by summoning him to the upper world and appointing him Protector of the Horses in the Imperial Stable. But this was not good enough for the scoundrel, who rebelled against Heaven. We sent Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha to accept his surrender, extended him an amnesty, and summoned him back to the upper world. We made him a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' though this carried no salary. As he had nothing to do he would go wandering all over the

place, and for fear that this might lead to trouble we had him look after the Peach Orchard. Once again he flouted the law by stealing and eating every single one of the big peaches from the old trees. When the banquet was to be held he was not invited as his position was purely an honorary one; so he played a trick on the Bare-foot Immortal, went to the banquet looking like him, ate all the immortal delicacies, and drank all the immortal liquor. On top of this he stole Lord Lao Zi's pills of immortality and some imperial liquor, which he took to his mountain for the monkeys to enjoy. This made us very angry so we sent a hundred thousand heavenly troops to spread

heaven-and-earth nets and subdue him. But we have received no reports today, so we do not know whether we have been victorious."

When the Bodhisattva heard this she said to Huian the Novice, "Hurry down from Heaven to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit and find out about the military situation. If you meet with any opposition you may do your bit to help, but the important thing is to bring an accurate report back." Huian the Novice straightened his robes, took his iron staff, left the palace by cloud, and went straight to the mountain. He saw that with the layer upon layer of heaven-and-earth nets, and the men holding bells and shouting passwords at the gates of the camp, the cordon round the mountain was watertight.

Huian stopped and called, "Heavenly soldiers at the gates of the camp, I would trouble you to report that I, Moksa, the second son of Heavenly King Li, also known as Huian, the senior disciple of Guanyin of the Southern Sea, have come to ask about the military situation." Then the divine soldiers of the Five Mountains inside the camp went in through the gates of the headquarters, where the Rat, the Cock, the Horse and the Hare stars reported the news to the commander of the central corps. Heavenly King Li sent a flag of command with the order that the heaven-and-earth nets were to be opened to let Huian in. The East was just beginning to grow light as Huian followed the flag in and bowed to Heavenly King Li and the four other heavenly kings.

"Where have you come from, my son?" asked Heavenly King Li.

"Your stupid son accompanied the Bodhisattva to the Peach Banquet, and when she found the banquet deserted and nobody at the Jade

Pool, she took me and the other Immortals to see the Jade Emperor. The Jade Emperor told her that you, father, and the other kings had gone down to the lower world to capture this monkey fiend. As the Jade Emperor has received no news all day on the outcome of the battle, the Bodhisattva sent me here to find out what has happened."

"We arrived here and encamped yesterday," Heavenly King Li replied, "then sent the Nine Bright Shiners to challenge the enemy to battle, but that wretch used such tremendous magic powers that the Nine Bright Shiners all came back defeated. Then we led out own soldiers into action, and the wretch also drew up his line of battle. Our hundred thousand heavenly soldiers fought an indecisive engagements with him till dusk when he used a spell to divide up his body and force us back. When we withdrew our forces and held an investigation, we found that we had only captured wolves, tigers, leopards, and so on, and had not even taken half a monkey fiend. We have not yet given battle today."

Before he had finished speaking someone appeared outside the gates of the headquarters to report that the Great Sage was outside at the head of a crowd of monkey spirits, clamoring for battle. The four other Heavenly Kings, Heavenly King Li, and Prince Nezha were all for committing their forces, but Moksa said,

"Father, when your stupid son was instructed by the Bodhisattva to come here and find out the news, I was also told that if there was a battle I could do my bit to help. May I please go and see what sort of a 'Great Sage'

he is, untalented though I am?"

"My boy," said Heavenly King Li, "you have been cultivating your conduct with the Bodhisattva for some years now so I suppose that you must have acquired some magic powers, but do be very careful."

The splendid Prince Moksa hitched up his embroidered robes and charged out through the gates of the headquarters waving his iron staff with both hands. "Which of you is the Great Sage Equaling Heaven?" he shouted.

"I am," answered the Great Sage, brandishing his As—You—Will cudgel. "But who do you think you are, asking a question like that?"

"I am Prince Moksa, the second son of Heavenly King Li, and I am now a disciple and a guard before the throne of the Bodhisattva Guanyin. My Buddhist name is Huian."

"Why have you come here to see me instead of staying in the Southern Sea and cultivating your conduct?"

asked the Great Sage, and Moksa replied, "My teacher sent me here to find out about the military situation, but now that I've seen your savagery I've come to capture you."

"You talk big, don't you," said the Great Sage.

"Well then, don't go away, try a taste of my cudgel." Moksa, not in the least frightened, struck at him with his iron staff. It was a fine fight they fought, half–way up the mountainside outside the gates of the headquarters.

The staves were matched, but made of different iron;

The weapons clashed, but their masters were not the same.

One was a wayward Immortal known as the Great Sage,

The other a true dragon disciple of Guanyin.

The cast–iron staff, beaten with a thousand hammers,

Had been forged by the art of the Ding and the Jia.

The As–You–Will cudgel once anchored the Milky Way:

As the Treasure Stilling the Sea its magic power was great.

When the two met they were well matched indeed.

And they parried and lunged at each other without end.

The sinister cudgel, Infinitely murderous,

Could whirl round your waist as quick as the wind,

The spear–catching staff,

Never yielding an opening,

Was irresistible, parrying to right and left.

On the one side the flags and banners fly,

On the other the camel drums roll.

Ten thousand heavenly generals in multiple encirclement;

A cave of monkey devils densely packed together.

Chapter 6

77

Journey to the West

Monstrous fogs and evil clouds cover the earth,

While the smoke of deadly battle rises to the sky.

Yesterday's fighting was bad enough;

Today's struggle is even worse.

The admirable skills of the Monkey King

Put Moksa to flight, utterly defeated.

After they had fought some fifty or sixty rounds, Huian's arm and shoulders were numbed and aching, and he could resist the Great Sage no longer. Waving his staff in a feint, he turned away and ran. The Great Sage then withdrew his monkey soldiers and encamped outside the gates of the cave.

The big and little heavenly soldiers at the gates of the other camp received Huian and let him go straight to the headquarters, where he gasped and panted for breath as he said to the Four Heavenly Kings, Li the Pagoda – bearer, and his brother Prince Nezha, "What a Great Sage! What a Great Sage! His magic powers are too much for me. He beat me." Startled by this news, Heavenly King Li had a request for reinforcements written and sent the Strong – arm Devil King and Prince Moksa up to Heaven to submit.

Not daring to waste a moment, the two messengers rushed out through the heaven – and – earth nets and mounted their propitious clouds. A moment later they arrived outside the Hall of Universal Brightness, where they greeted the Four Heavenly Teachers, who led

them to the Hall of Miraculous Mist and handed up their memorial. Prince Moksa, or Huian, did homage to the Bodhisattva, who asked him what he had found out.

"As you instructed me, I went to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit," reported Huian, "asked them to open the gates of the heaven—and—earth net, saw my father, and told him of the orders you had given me. His Majesty my father said that they fought against the Monkey King yesterday but did not capture a single monkey spirit——only tigers, leopards, lions, elephants and so on. While he was telling me this the Monkey King demanded battle again, so your disciple fought some fifty or sixty rounds against him with my iron staff, but I was no match for him. He beat me, and drove me back to the camp. This is why my father has sent me and the Strong—arm Devil King up to Heaven to ask for reinforcements." The Bodhisattva lowered her head in deep thought.

The Jade Emperor opened the memorial and saw that it contained a request for help. "This intolerable monkey spirit has enough tricks to fight off a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers," he observed with a smile.

"Heavenly King Li has asked for reinforcements. Which heavenly soldiers should I send him?"

Before the words were out of his mouth, Guanyin put her hands together and said, "Do not worry, You Majesty. I can recommend a god to capture this monkey."

"Which god?" the Jade Emperor asked, and the Bodhisattva replied, "Your Majesty's nephew, the Illustrious Sage and True Lord Erlang, who is now living at Guanjiangkou in Guanzhou, enjoying the incense that the lower beings burn to him. In the past he exterminated the Six Bogies. He has the Brothers of Plum Hill and the twelve hundred straw—headed gods, and his magical powers are enormous. He will agree to be sent though he would not obey a summons to come here, so Your Majesty might like to issue a decree ordering him to take his troops to the rescue." The Jade Emperor then issued such a decree and sent the Strong—arm Devil Chapter 6

King to deliver it.

The devil king took the decree, mounted his cloud, and went straight to Guanjiangkou. He reached the temple of the True Lord within an hour. When the demon judges guarding the gates went in to report that there was an envoy from heaven standing outside with an imperial decree, Erlang went with the brothers to receive the decree outside the gates, and incense was burned as he read.

The Great Sage Equaling Heaven, the monkey fiend of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, has rebelled.

Because he stole peaches, wine and pills while in Heaven and wrecked the Peach Banquet, we have despatched a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers and eighteen heaven—and—earth nets to surround the mountain and force him to submit, but we have not yet succeeded. We do now therefore especially appoint our worthy nephew and his sworn brothers to go to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit and give their help in eliminating him. When you succeed, large rewards and high office shall be yours.

Erlang was delighted. He told the envoy from Heaven to go back and report that the would be putting his sword to the Emperor's service. We need not describe how the devil king reported back to Heaven.

The True Lord Erlang called the six sworn brothers of Plum Hill—
—Marshals Kang, Zhang, Yao, and Li, and Generals Quo Shen and Zhi Jian— —together before the hall. "The Jade Emperor has just ordered us to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit to subdue a monkey fiend," he said. "You are all coming with me."

The brothers were all eager to go, and mustering their divine troops they unleashed a gale wind. In an instant they had crossed the Eastern Ocean, riding eagles and leading dogs, pulling their bows and drawing their crossbows, and had reached the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.

Finding that the many layers of heaven—earth nets were impenetrable, Erlang shouted, "Listen, all you generals in charge of the heaven—and—earth nets. I am the True Lord and the Illustrious Sage Erlang, and I have been sent here by the Jade Emperor to capture the monkey fiend. Open the gates of the camp and let me in at once." Each line of gods forming the nets let them through, and the four other Heavenly Kings and Heavenly King Li all came to welcome him outside the headquarters. When the introductions were over he asked how the fighting had gone, and the Heavenly Kings gave him a full account of what had happened.

"Now that I, the Little Sage, have come here I shall have to match a few transformations with him," said Erlang with a smile. "I hope that all you gentlemen will maintain a close cordon with your heaven—and—earth nets, but don't screen off the top of the mountain; then I'll be able to fight him. If he beats me I shan't need the help of you gentlemen, as I have my brothers to support me; and if I beat him I won't have to trouble you to tie him up as my brothers can do it. I would just like to ask Heavenly King Li to stand in the sky and operate this fiend—detecting mirror. I'm worried that if he's beaten he may go and hide somewhere, so you will have to give me a clear view of him and not let him get away." The Heavenly Kings stayed in the four quarters, and all the heavenly soldiers were drawn up in their battle positions.

The True Lord Erlang went out at the head of the four marshals and the two generals——making seven sworn brothers with himself included——to challenge the enemy to battle; and he ordered his other officers to defend the camp firmly and keep the eagles and dogs under control. All the straw—headed gods acknowledged the order. Erlang then went to the outside of the Water Curtain Cave, where he saw the monkey hordes neatly drawn up in a coiled—dragon battle line; in the middle of the central corps stood a pole with a banner on it reading "Great Sage Equaling Heaven."

Chapter 6

"What business has that loathsome fiend to call himself the equal of Heaven?" Erlang asked; and the six sworn brothers of Plum Hill replied, "Stop admiring him and challenge him to battle." When the junior monkeys at the gate of their camp saw the True Lord Erlang they rushed back to report, whereupon the Monkey King took his gold—banded cudgel, adjusted his golden armour, put on his cloud—walking shoes, felt his golden helmet, and leapt out through the gates of the camp. He saw at first sight how cool and remarkable Erlang looked, and how elegantly he was dressed. Indeed:

His bearing was refined, his visage noble,

His ears hung down to his shoulders, and his eyes shone.

The hat on his head had three peaks and phoenixes flying,

And his robe was of a pale goose – yellow.

His boots were lined with cloth of gold; dragons coiled round his socks; His jade belt was decorated with the eight jewels,

At his waist was a bow, curved like the moon,

In his hand a double – edged trident.

His axe had split open Peach Mountain when he rescued his mother, His bow had killed the twin phoenixes of Zongluo.

Widespread was his fame for killing the Eight Bogies,

And he had become one of Plum Hill's seven sages.

His heart was too lofty to acknowledge his relatives in Heaven; In his pride he went back to be a god at Guanjiang.

He was the Merciful and Miraculous Sage of the red city,

Erlang, whose transformations were numberless.

When the Great Sage saw him he laughed with delight, raised his gold – banded cudgel, and shouted, "Where are you from, little general, that you have the audacity to challenge me?"

"You must be blind, you wretch, if you can't recognize me. I am the nephew of the Jade Emperor, and my title is Merciful and Miraculous King Erlang. I am here on imperial orders to arrest you, Protector of the Horses, you rebel against Heaven, you reckless baboon."

"Now I remember who you are," replied the Great Sage. "Some years ago the Jade Emperor's younger sister wanted to be mortal and came down to the lower world, where she married a Mr. Yang and gave birth to a son, who split the Peach Mountain open with his axe. Is that who you are? I should really fling you a few curses, but I've got no quarrel with you; and it would be a pity to kill you by hitting you with my cudgel. So why don't you hurry back, young sir, and tell those four Heavenly Kings of yours to come out?"

When the True Lord Erlang heard this he burst out angrily, "Damned monkey! Where are your manners? Try this blade of mine!" The Great Sage dodged the blow and instantly raised his gold–banded club to hit back.

There was a fine battle between the two of them:

The Merciful God Erlang,

The Great Sage Equaling Heaven:

One is the Handsome Monkey King, the proud deceiver of his enemies;
The other a true pillar, the unknown subduer.

When the two met

They were both in a fighting mood.

He who had no respect before

Today learned a sense of proportion.

The iron staff raced with the flying dragons,

The divine cudgel seemed like a dancing phoenix.

Parrying to the left, thrusting to the right,

Advancing to meet a blow, flashing behind.

The brothers of Plum Hill add to one side's might,

While the other has the four Stalwart Generals to transmit orders.

As the flags wave and the drums roll each side is as one;

Battle–cries and gongs raise everyone's morale.

The two steel blades each watch for their chance,

But neither leaves an opening as they come and go.

The gold–banded cudgel, the treasure from the sea,

Can fly and transform itself to win the victory.

Chapter 6

A moment's delay and life is lost;

A single mistake will be the last.

After Erlang and the Great Sage had fought over three hundred rounds the outcome of the fight was still undecided. Erlang braced, himself, and with a shake became ten thousand fathoms tall; in his hands his two–bladed trident looked like the peaks of Mount Hua. His face was black, his fangs were long, and his hair was bright red: he looked ferociously evil. He hacked at the Great Sage's head. The Great Sage, also resorting to magic, gave himself a body as big as Erlang's and a face as frightening; and he raised his As–You–Will gold–banded cudgel, which was now like the pillar of Heaven on the summit of the Kunlun Mountain, to ward off Erlang's blow. This reduced the two ape field marshals Ma and Liu to such trembling terror that they could no longer wave their banners, while the gibbon generals Seng and Ba were too scared to use their swords. On the other side Kang, Zhang, Yao, Li, Guo Shen and Zhi Jian threw the straw–headed gods into an assault on the Water Curtain Cave, with the dogs and eagles unleashed and their bows and crossbows drawn.

This attack put the four monkey generals to flight, and two or three thousand devils were captured. The monkeys threw away their spears, tore off their armour, abandoned their swords and halberds, and fled screaming. Some went up the mountain and some returned to the cave, like roosting birds frightened by an owl, or stars scattered across the sky. That is all we have to say about the sworn brothers' victory.

The story goes on to tell how the True Lord Erlang and the Great Sage, having turned themselves into figures on the scale of Heaven and Earth, were locked in battle when the Great Sage was suddenly appalled to notice that the monkey fiends in his camp had scattered in terror. Putting off his magic appearance he broke away and fled, his cudgel in his hand. Seeing him go, the True Lord Erlang hurried after him with long strides.

"Where are you going?" he asked. "If you surrender at once, your life will be spared." The Great Sage, who had no heart left for the fight, was running as fast as he could. As he approached the mouth of the cave he came up against Marshals Kang, Zhang, Yao and Li, as well as Generals Guo Shen and Zhi Jian, blocking his way at the head of their

armies.

"Where are you going, damned monkey?" they asked, and the Great Sage hastily squeezed his gold – banded cudgel till it was the size of an embroidery needle and hid it in his ear. Then he shook himself, turned into a sparrow, flew up into a tree, and perched on one of its branches.

The six sworn brothers looked for him very hard but could find him nowhere, so they all shouted in unison,

"The monkey fiend has escaped, the monkey fiend has escaped."

As they were shouting the True Lord Erlang arrived and asked them, "Brothers, where had you chased him to when he disappeared?"

"We had him surrounded here just now, but he vanished." Erlang opened his phoenix eyes till they were quite round and looked about him. He saw that the Great Sage had changed himself into a sparrow and was perching on a branch; so he put off his magical appearance, threw down his divine trident, and took the pellet bow from his waist. Then he shook himself, changed into a kite, spread his wings, and swooped in to attack.

As soon as the Great Sage saw this he took off and turned himself into a big cormorant, soaring up into the sky. Erlang saw him, and with a quick shake of his feathers and a twist of his body he transformed himself into a crane and pierced the clouds as he tried to catch him. The Great Sage landed on a mountain stream and, changing into a fish, plunged into the water. Erlang, who had pursued him to the bank of the stream, could see no trace of him.

Chapter 6

"That macaque must have gone into the water and changed himself into some kind of fish or shrimp," he thought. "I'll transform myself again, then I'll get him." He turned into a fish – hawk and soared above the lower reaches of the stream and the first waves of the sea. He waited there for a time. Meanwhile the Great Sage, who was in the form of a fish, swam with the stream until he noticed a bird flying above him. It was quite like a blue kite, except that its feathers were not blue; it was quite like an egret, but it had no crest on its head; and

it was quite like a stork, but its legs were not red.

"That must be what Erlang turned himself into while waiting for me," he thought, turned round quickly, and went away.

"The fish who turned round," thought Erlang when he saw this, "is like a carp but its tail isn't red; it's like a mandarin fish, but I can't see the pattern on its scales; it's like a snakehead, but without a star on its head; and like a bream, but it has no needles on its gills. Why did it turn round the moment it saw me? It must be that monkey transformed." He swooped down and snapped at the Great Sage with his beak. The Great Sage leapt out of the water, turned into a water-snake, swam to the bank, and slid into the grass. Failing to catch the fish in his beak, Erlang saw a snake jump out of the water and realized it was the Great Sage. He changed himself at once into a red-crested grey crane, and stretched out his long beak that was like a pair of pointed pincers to eat up the water-snake. The snake gave a jump and became a bustard standing stiffly on a smartweed-covered bank. When Erlang saw that he had turned himself into so low a creature--for the bustard is the lowest and lewdest of birds, not caring whether it mates with phoenix, eagle or crow--he kept his distance, reverted to his own body, went away to fetch and load his pellet bow, and knocked him flying with a single shot.

The Great Sage seized the chance as he rolled down the precipice to crouch there and turn himself into a temple to a local god. He opened his mouth wide to look like the entrance to the temple and turned his teeth into the doors; he made his tongue into a statue of a god and his eyes into windows and lattice. He could not tuck his tail away, so he stuck it up behind him as a flagpole. When Erlang came to the foot of the precipice he could not see the bustard he had shot over, and anxiously opening his phoenix eyes he looked carefully around and saw a temple with its flagpole at the back.

"It must be that monkey over there," he observed with a smile. "He's trying to fool me again. I've seen temples before, but never one with the flagpole at the back. I'm sure it is that beast up to his tricks again. If he'd managed to lure me in, he'd have been able to get me with a single bite. Of course I won't go in. I'll smash his windows in with my fist, then I'll kick his door down."

"Vicious, really vicious," thought the Great Sage with horror when he heard him say this. "Those doors are my teeth, and the windows are my eyes; and if he smashes my teeth and bashes in my eyes, what sort

of a state will that leave me in?" With a tiger leap he disappeared into the sky.

The True Lord Erlang rushed around wildly, but he could only see his six sworn brothers, who crowded round him and asked, "Elder brother, did you catch the Great Sage?"

"That monkey turned himself into a temple to fool me," he replied with a laugh. "Just when I was going to smash his windows and kick in his door he gave a jump and vanished without a trace. Strange, very strange."

They were all astonished, and though they looked all around they could see no sign of him.

"Brothers, you patrol this area while I go to look for him above," said Erlang, and with a quick jump he was riding a cloud in mid–air.

When he saw Heavenly King Li holding high the fiend–detecting mirror and standing with Nezha at the edge of a cloud, the True Lord asked, "Your Heavenly Majesty, have you seen that Monkey King?"

"He hasn't come up here– –I've been keeping a lookout for him with this mirror," the Heavenly King replied.

The True Lord Erlang then told him how he had used transformations and magic to capture the monkey hordes.

"He changed into a temple," Erlang went on, "but got away just when I was going to hit him." On hearing this, Heavenly King Li turned the fiend–detecting mirror in all four directions, then said with a laugh, "Hurry away, True Lord, hurry away. The monkey made himself invisible to get through the encirclement, and he's gone to your place, Guanjiangkou." Erlang took his divine trident and returned to Guanjiangkou in pursuit.

The Great Sage had already arrived there, changed himself into the likeness of the god Erlang with a shake of his body, put away his cloud, and gone into the temple. The demon judges did not realize who he really was, so they all kowtowed to welcome him. He took his

seat in the middle of the temple, and inspected the offerings: the beef, mutton and pork presented by one Li Hu, the ex-voto promised by a Zhang Long, the letter from a Zhao Jia asking for a son, and one Qian Bing's prayer for recovery from illness. As he was looking round it was announced that another Lord Erlang had arrived. All the demon judges hurried to look, and they were all astonished.

The True Lord Erlang asked, "Has a so-called Great Sage Equaling Heaven been here?"

"We haven't seen any Great Sages," they replied, "only another god who's looking around inside."

The True Lord rushed in through the gates, and as soon as the Great Sage saw him he reverted to his own appearance and said, "There's no point in shouting, sir. This temple's mine now."

The True Lord raised his double-bladed trident and swung at the Monkey King's head, but the Monkey King dodged the blow by magic, took his embroidery needle, shook it till it was as thick as a bowl, and rushed forward to meet the attack. Shouting and yelling, they fought their way out through the gates, and went on fighting through the mists and clouds all the way back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. The Four Heavenly Kings and all their soldiers were so alarmed that they kept an even tighter guard. Marshals Kang and Zhang and the others came to meet the True Lord, and combined their efforts to surround the Handsome Monkey King. But of this no more for now.

After the Strong-arm Demon King had sent the True Lord Erlang and his six sworn brothers with their troops to capture the fiend, he had gone back to Heaven to report. He found the Jade Emperor, the Bodhisattva Guanyin, the Queen Mother and all his immortal ministers in conference.

"Although Erlang has joined the fight, we have had no reports on it all day," the Jade Emperor said.

Guanyin put her hands together and replied, "May I suggest that Your Majesty go out through the Southern Gate of Heaven with Lord Lao Zi to see for yourself what is happening."

"A good idea," said the Emperor, and he went by chariot with Lao Zi, the Queen Mother, and all the immortal ministers to the Southern Gate of Heaven. Here they were met by a number of heavenly soldiers and strongmen. When the gates were opened and they looked into the distance they saw that the heavenly hosts were spread all around in a

net; Heavenly King Li and Nezha were standing in mid–air with the fiend–detecting mirror, and Erlang was struggling with the Great Sage within the encircling ring.

The Bodhisattva addressed Lao Zi and asked, "What do you think of the god Erlang I recommended? He really does have divine powers. He's just got that Great Sage cornered, and all he has to do now is to catch him. If I give him a little help now he will certainly be able to do it."

"What weapon would you use, Bodhisattva? How could you help him?" Lao Zi asked.

"I'll drop that pure vase of willow twigs on the monkey's head. Even if it doesn't kill him it will knock him off balance and enable the Little Sage to catch him."

"That vase of yours is made of porcelain," Lao Zi replied, "and if you hit the target that will be fine. But if it were to miss his head and smash into his iron club, it would be shattered. Just hold your hand while I give him a little help."

"What sort of weapon do you have?" the Bodhisattva asked, and Lord Lao Zi replied, "I've got one all right."

He pulled up his sleeve and took a bracelet off his right arm.

"This weapon," he said, "is made of tempered steel to which I have added the magic elixir. It preserves my miraculous essence, can transform itself, is proof against fire and water, and can snare anything. One of its names is Diamond Jade and the other is Diamond Noose. When I went out through the Han Pass some years ago to turn into a foreigner and become a Buddha, I have a great deal to thank it for. It's the best protection at any time. Just watch while I throw it down and hit him."

As soon as he had finished speaking he threw it down from outside the heavenly gate, and it fell into the camp on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, hitting the Monkey King neatly on the head. The Monkey King was too preoccupied with fighting the seven sages to notice this

weapon falling on him from heaven, and when it struck him on the forehead he lost his balance and stumbled, then picked himself up and started to run. The slim dog of the god Erlang caught him up and bit him in the calf, bringing him down again. As he lay on the ground he cursed at the dog.

"You don't bother your own master, damn you; why pick on me to bite?" He rolled over and tried unsuccessfully to get up, but the seven sages all held him down, roped him up, and put a sickle–shaped blade round his collar–bone to prevent him from making any more transformations.

Lord Lao Zi then recovered his Diamond Jade and invited the Jade Emperor, Guanyin, the Queen Mother, and all the immortal ministers to return to the Hall of Miraculous Mist. Down below, Heavenly King Li and the four other Heavenly Kings assembled their troops and pulled up the stockade. They went over to congratulate the Little Sage and said, "It was all thanks to you, Little Sage."

"No, it was thanks to the great blessings of His Celestial Majesty and the might of all the gods– –it was nothing I did," replied the Little Sage.

"No time to talk now, elder brother," said the four marshals Kang, Zhang, Yao, and Li. "Let's take this wretch up to Heaven to see the Jade Emperor and ask what is to be done with him."

"Worthy brothers," Erlang replied, "you never received any heavenly commission, so it would not be right for you to see the Jade Emperor. The heavenly soldiers can escort him while I go up there with the Heavenly Kings to report back. You should comb this mountain with your troops, and when you've finished go back to Guanjiangkou. When I've asked for our rewards, I'll come back and we can celebrate together." The four marshals and the two generals accepted their orders, and the rest mounted their clouds and went to Heaven triumphantly singing victory songs. Before long they were outside the Hall of Universal Brightness. The heavenly teachers reported to the throne that the Four Great Heavenly Kings and the rest of them had captured the monkey devil, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, and were now waiting to be summoned. The Jade Emperor then issued an edict ordering the Strong–arm Demon King and the heavenly soldiers to march him to the Demon–beheading Tower, where the wretch was to have his body chopped to mincemeat. Goodness!

Chapter 6

The bully and cheat now meets with a bitter punishment,

The heroic spirit must now come to an end.

If you don't know what happened to the Monkey King's life, then listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 7

The Great Sage Escapes from the Eight Trigrams Furnace

The Mind – Ape Is Fixed Beneath Five Elements Mountain

Wealth and honour, glory and fame,

Are predetermined by fate:

No one should act against conscience to covet any of them.

Far – going and deep

Are the good results of true enlightenment and loyalty.

Heaven punishes all wild and wicked deeds

If not at once then later on.

Ask the Lord of the East the reason why

Disasters now strike him.

It is because his ambition was high, his plans far – reaching,

He did not respect authority, and he smashed convention.

The story goes on to tell how the Great Sage Equaling Heaven was escorted by the hosts of heavenly soldiers to the Demon – beheading Tower and tied to the Demon – subduing Pillar. They hacked at him with sabres, sliced at him with axes, lunged at him with spears and cut at him with swords, but they were unable to inflict a single wound on him. The Southern Dipper angrily ordered all the gods of the Department of Fire to set him alight and burn him up, but he would not ignite. He told the gods of the Department of Thunder to nail

splinters of thunder into him, but however hard they tried they could not harm a hair of his body. The Strong-arm Demon King and the rest of them then reported this to the throne.

"Your Majesty," they said, "this Great Sage has learned somewhere or other how to protect himself by magic.

Although your subjects have hacked at him with sabres, sliced at him with axes, struck at him with thunder and tried to burn him with fire, we have not been able to harm a hair of his body. What are we to do?"

"How can we deal with a wretch like this?" the Jade Emperor asked, and the Lord Lao Zi replied to this in a memorial: "That monkey has eaten the peaches of immortality, drunk the imperial liquor, and stolen the pills of elixir. He swallowed those five gourds of pills of mine, fresh ones and mature ones alike. Now we have used the fire of samadhi on him, which has tempered his body and made it a diamond one that cannot be harmed. The best course would be to let me take him and put him in my Eight Trigrams Furnace, where I can refine out my elixir with the civil and martial fire and reduce him to ashes at the same time. The Jade Emperor then ordered the Six Dings and the Six Jias to untie him and hand him over to the Lord Lao Zi, who took him away in obedience to the imperial decree. At the same time the Jade Emperor summoned the Illustrious Sage Erlang to his presence and rewarded him with a hundred golden flowers, a hundred jars of imperial liquor, a hundred pills of elixir, rare jewels, lustrous pearls, brocade, embroidery, and other gifts to share with his sworn brothers. The True Lord Erlang thanked him for his bounty and returned to Guanjiangkou.

When he reached the Tushita Palace, Lord Lao Zi had the Great Sage untied, took the hook from his collar-bone, pushed him into the Eight Trigrams Furnace, and ordered the priests in charge of it and the fire-boys to fan the fire up to refine him. Now this furnace was made up of the Eight Trigrams-- *Qian, Kan, Gen, Zhen, Sun, Li, Kun,* and *Dui*-- so he squeezed himself into the "Palace of *Sun,"* as *Sun* was the wind, and where there was wind there could be no fire. All that happened was that the wind stirred up the smoke, which made both his eyes red and left him somewhat blind with the illness called "fire

eyes with golden pupils."

Time soon passed, and without him realizing it the seven times seven, or forty – nine, days had passed, and Lord Lao Zi's fire had reached the required temperature and burned for long enough. One day the furnace was opened for the elixir to be taken out. The Great Sage, who was shielding his eyes with both hands and wiping away his tears, heard a noise at the top of the furnace. He looked hard and saw daylight; and, unable to stand being in there a moment longer, leapt out of the furnace, kicked it over with a crash, and was off. In the ensuing chaos the fire – boys, the keepers of the furnace, the Dings and the Jias all tried to grab him, but he knocked them all down. He was like a white – browed tiger gone berserk, a single – horned dragon raving mad.

Lord Lao Zi rushed up to seize him, but was thrown head over heels as the Great Sage freed himself. He took the As – You – Will cudgel from his ear, and shook it in the wind till it was thick as a bowl, and once more created total chaos in the Palace of Heaven, not caring in the least what he did. He laid about him to such effect that the Nine Bright Shiners shut their windows and doors, and not a sign was to be seen of the Four Heavenly Kings.

Marvellous monkey spirit! As the poem has it,

His primordial body matches an earlier heaven,

Completely natural throughout ten thousand ages;

Vast and passive, blended with the Great Monad;

Always immobile, known as the Prime Mystery.

After so much refining in the furnace he is not lead or mercury;

Having lived long outside the ordinary he is a natural Immortal.

His changes are inexhaustible, and still he has more,

So say nothing about the Three Refuges or Five Abstentions.

Another poem says:

A single point of magic light can fill the whole of space;

Likewise that staff of his:

Longer or shorter, depending on his needs,

Upright or horizontal, it can shrink or grow.

Yet another poem runs:

To the ape's immortal body is matched a human mind:

That the mind is an ape is deeply meaningful.

It was quite true that the Great Sage equaled Heaven:

The appointment as Protector of the Horse showed no discernment.

Horse and ape together make mind and thought;

Bind them tightly together, and do not seek elsewhere.

When all phenomena are reduced to truth they follow a single pattern;
Like the Tathagatha reaching nirvana under the two trees.

This time the Monkey King made no distinctions between high and humble as he laid about him to East and West with his iron club. Not a single god opposed him. He fought his way into the Hall of Universal Brightness outside the Hall of Miraculous Mist, where the Kingly Spirit Officer, the lieutenant of the Helpful Sage and True Lord, fortunately was on duty. When he saw the Great Sage charging around he took up his golden mace and went forward to resist him.

"Where are you going, damned monkey?" he asked. "If you go wild you'll have me to deal with." The Great Sage was not in a position to argue with him, so he raised his cudgel to strike him. The Spirit Officer lifted his mace and advanced to meet him. It was a fine fight:

Great was the fame of the brave and loyal officer,

Evil the name of the rebel who bullied Heaven.

The low one and the good one were well matched;

Valiant heroes fighting each other.

Vicious the iron cudgel,

Quick the golden mace.

Both were straight, merciless, and terrible.

One of them is a deity formed from the Great Monad's thunder;

The other is the monkey spirit, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven.

With golden mace or iron cudgel each is a master;

Both are weapons from the palaces of the gods.

Today they show their might in the Hall of Miraculous Mist,

A wonderful display of courage and skill.

One in his folly wanting to capture the Palace of the Dipper and the Bull, The other exerting all his strength to support the world of the gods.

The fight is too hard to allow the use of magic,

As mace and cudgel struggle without result.

As they fought together without either of them emerging as victor, the True Lord sent an officer with a message to the Thunder Palace ordering the thirty－six thunder generals to surround the Great Sage. Although they all fought with the utmost ferocity, the Great Sage was not in the least frightened, and parried and blocked to left and right with his As－You－Will cudgel, resisting his opponents in front and behind. Before long he found that the pressure was too great from the sabres, spears, swords, halberds, clubs, maces, claws－and－ropes, hammer, pole－axes, battle－axes, grabs, pennoned hooks, and moon －shaped bills of the thunder generals; so he shook himself and grew three heads and six arms. Then he shook his As－You－Will cudgel and changed it into three cudgels, and wielding the three cudgels in his six hands he flew round and round inside the encirclement like a spinning wheel. None of the thunder generals could get anywhere near Chapter 7

him. Indeed,

Perfectly round,

Gleaming bright,

How can men learn to live for ever?

He can enter fire without being burned,

And go in the water but not be drowned.

He is as bright as a Mani pearl,

Swords and spears cannot harm him.

He is capable of good,

And capable of evil:

When faced with the choice between good and evil he might do either.

If he is good he becomes a Buddha or an Immortal,

If bad, he grows fur and horns.

With his boundless transformations he wrecked the Heavenly palace,
Nor can thunder generals and divine troops take him.

Although the gods had the Great Sage cornered, they were unable to get near him. The noise of the shouting and the fighting had already alarmed the Jade Emperor, who ordered the Miracle Official Youyi to go to the West with the Helpful Sage and True Lord and ask the Buddha to subdue him.

When these two sages received the order they went to the wonderful land of the Miraculous Mountain, where they offered their greetings to the Four Vajrapanis and Eight Bodhisattvas before the Thunder Monastery and asked them to pass on their massage. The gods went to the foot of the lotus seat to inform the Tathagata, who invited the two sages to his presence. When the sages had performed the threefold obeisance to the Buddha they stood in attendance below the throne.

"Why has the Jade Emperor troubled you two sages to come here?"

asked the Buddha.

"A monkey," they reported, "who was born on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, has used his magic powers to unite all the monkeys and throw the world into confusion. The Jade Emperor sent down an edict of amnesty and appointed him Protector of the Horses, but this was not good enough for him, so he left Heaven again.

When heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha were unsuccessful in their attempt to capture him the Jade Emperor sent down another amnesty with his appointment as a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven'. At first this appointment Chapter 7

was purely nominal, but later he was told to look after the Peach Orchard. But he stole the peaches and then went to the Jade Pool where he stole the delicacies and the liquor and wrecked the banquet. In his drunkenness he staggered into the Tushita Palace, stole Lord Lao Zi's pills of immortality, and left Heaven again. The Jade Emperor sent a hundred thousand heavenly troops, but they were still unable to subdue him. Then Guanyin recommended the True Lord Erlang and his sworn brothers to go after the monkey, and he used many a transformation until he was finally able to capture the monkey after the Lord Lao Zi hit him with his Diamond Jade. The monkey was then taken to the imperial presence, and the order for his execution was given. But although he was hacked at with sabres, chopped at with axes, burned with fire, and struck with thunder, none of this did him any damage; so Lord Lao Zi requested permission to take him away and refine him with fire.

But when the cauldron was opened after forty—nine days he jumped out of the Eight Trigrams Furnace, routed the heavenly troops, and went straight to the Hall of Universal Brightness in front of the Hall of Miraculous Mist. Here he has been stopped and engaged in fierce combat by the Kingly Spirit Officer, the lieutenant of the Helpful Sage and True Lord Erlang, thunder generals have been sent there to encircle him; but no one has been able to get close to him. In this crisis the Jade Emperor makes a special appeal to you, the Tathagata, to save his throne."

On hearing this the Tathagata said to the assembled Bodhisattvas, "You stay here quietly in this dharma hall and behave yourselves in

your seats of meditation while I go to deal with the demon and save the throne."

Telling the Venerable Ananda and the Venerable Kasyapa to accompany him, the Tathagata left the Thunder Monastery and went straight to the gate of the Hall of Miraculous Mist, where his ears were shaken by the sound of shouting as the thirty – six thunder generals surrounded the Great Sage. The Buddha issued a decree that ran: "Tell the thunder generals to stop fighting, open up their camp, and call on that Great Sage to come out, so that I may ask him what divine powers he has."

The generals then withdrew, whereupon the Great Sage put away his magic appearance and came forward in his own body. He was in a raging temper as he asked, "Where are you from? You are a good man. You've got nerve, stopping the fighting and questioning me!"

"I am the Venerable Sakyamuni from the Western Land of Perfect Bliss," replied the Buddha with a smile. "I have heard of your wild and boorish behavior, and of your repeated rebellions against Heaven, and I would like to know where you were born, when you found the Way, and why you have been so ferocious."

"I am," the Great Sage said,

"A miracle – working Immortal born of Heaven and Earth,

An old ape from the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.

My home is in the Water Curtain Cave,

I sought friends and teachers, and became aware of the Great Mystery.

"I have practiced many a method for obtaining eternal life, Infinite are the transformations I have learned.

That is why I found the mortal world too cramped,

And decided to live in the Jade Heaven.

"None can reign forever in the Hall of Miraculous Mist;

Kings throughout history have had to pass on their power.

The strong should be honoured – –he should give way to me:

This is the only reason I wage my heroic fight."

The Buddha laughed mockingly.

"You wretch! You are only a monkey spirit and you have the effrontery to want to grab the throne of the Jade Emperor. He has trained himself since childhood, and suffered hardship for one thousand, seven hundred and fifty kalpas. Each kalpa is 129,600 years, so you can work out for yourself how long it has taken him to be able to enjoy this great and infinite Way. But you are a beast who has only just become a man for the first time. How dare you talk so big? You're not human, not even human! I'll shorten your life–span. Accept my teaching at once and stop talking such nonsense! Otherwise you'll be in for trouble and your life will very shortly be over; and that will be so much the worse for your original form too."

"Although he has trained himself for a long time, ever since he was a child, he still has no right to occupy this place for ever," the Great Sage said. "As the saying goes, 'Emperors are made by turn; next year it may be me.'

If he can be persuaded to move out and make Heaven over to me, that'll be fine. But if he doesn't abdicate in my favour I'll most certainly make things hot for him, and he'll never know peace and quiet again."

"What have you got, besides immortality and the ability to transform yourself, that gives you the nerve to try to seize the Heavenly Palace?" the Buddha asked.

"I can do many tricks indeed," the Great Sage replied. "I can perform seventy–two transformations, and I can preserve my youth for ten thousand kalpas. I can ride a somersault cloud that takes me thirty –six thousand miles at a single jump. So why shouldn't I sit on the throne of Heaven?"

"I'll have a wager with you then," said the Buddha. "If you're clever enough to get out of my right hand with a single somersault, you will be the winner, and there will be no more need for weapons or fighting: I shall invite the Jade Emperor to come and live in the West and abdicate the Heavenly Palace to you. But if you can't get out of the palm of my hand you will have to go down to the world below as

a devil and train yourself for several more kalpas before coming to argue about it again."

When he heard this offer the Great Sage smiled to himself and thought, "This Buddha is a complete idiot. I can cover thirty–six thousand miles with a somersault, so how could I fail to jump out of the palm of his hand, which is less than a foot across?"

With this in his mind he asked eagerly, "Do you guarantee that yourself?"

"Yes, yes," the Buddha replied, and he stretched out his right hand, which seemed to be about the size of a lotus leaf. Putting away his As–You–Will cudgel, the Great Sage summoned up all his divine powers, jumped into the palm of the Buddha's hand, and said, "I'm off." Watch him as he goes like a streak of light and disappears completely. The Buddha, who was watching him with his wise eyes, saw the Monkey King whirling forward like a windmill and not stopping until he saw five flesh–pink pillars topped by dark vapours.

"This is the end of the road," he said, "so now I'll go back. The Buddha will be witness, and the Hall of Miraculous Mist will be mine." Then he thought again, "Wait a moment. I'll leave my mark here to prove my case when I talk to the Buddha." He pulled out a hair, breathed on it with his magic breath, and shouted

"Change." It turned into a writing brush dipped in ink, and with it he wrote THE GREAT SAGE EQUALING

HEAVEN WAS HERE in big letters on the middle pillar. When that was done he put the hair back on, and, not standing on his dignity, made a pool of monkey piss at the foot of the pillar. Then he turned his somersault round and went back to where he had started from.

"I went, and now I'm back. Tell the Jade Emperor to hand the Heavenly Palace over to me," he said, standing in the Buddha's palm.

"I've got you, you piss–spirit of a monkey," roared the Buddha at him. "You never left the palm of my hand."

"You're wrong there," the Great Sage replied. "I went to the farthest point of Heaven, where I saw five flesh – pink pillars topped by dark vapours. I left my mark there: do you dare come and see it with me?"

"There's no need to go. Just look down." The Great Sage looked down with his fire eyes with golden pupils to see the words "The Great Sage Equaling Heaven Was Here" written on the middle finger of the Buddha's right hand. The stink of monkey – piss rose from the fold at the bottom of the finger.

"What a thing to happen," exclaimed the Great Sage in astonishment. "I wrote this on one of the pillars supporting the sky, so how can it be on his finger now? He must have used divination to know what I was going to do. I don't believe it. I refuse to believe it! I'll go there and come back again."

The dear Great Sage hurriedly braced himself to jump, but the Buddha turned his hand over and pushed the Monkey King out through the Western Gate of Heaven. He turned his five fingers into a mountain chain belonging to the elements Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, renamed them the Five Elements Mountain, and gently held him down.

All the thunder gods and the disciples Ananda and Kasyapa put their hands together to praise the Buddha:

"Wonderful, wonderful,

An egg learned to be a man,

Cultivated his conduct, and achieved the Way.

Heaven had been undisturbed for the thousand kalpas,

Until one day the spirits and gods were scattered.

"The rebel against Heaven, wanting high position,

Insulted Immortals, stole the pills, and destroyed morality.

Today his terrible sins are being punished,

Who knows when he will be able to rise again?"

When he had eliminated the monkey fiend the Buddha told Ananda and Kasyapa to return with him to the Western paradise. At that moment Tian Peng and Tian You hurried out of the Hall of Miraculous Mist to say,

"We beg the Tathagata to wait a moment as the Jade Emperor's chariot is coming."

The Buddha turned round and looked up, and an instant later he saw an eight－splendour imperial chariot and a nine－shining jeweled canopy appear to the sound of strange and exquisite music, and the chanting of countless sacred verses. Precious flowers were scattered and incense was burned.

The Jade Emperor went straight up to the Buddha and said, "We are deeply indebted to the great Buddha's powers for wiping out the demon, and we hope that the Tathagata will spend a day here so that we may invite all the Immortals to a feast of thanksgiving."

The Buddha did not dare refuse, so putting his hands together he replied, "This old monk only came here in obedience to Your Celestial Majesty's command. What magic powers can I pretend to? This was all due to the wonderful good fortune of Your Celestial Majesty and the other gods. How could I possibly allow you to thank me?"

The Jade Emperor then ordered all the gods of the Department of Thunder to split up and invite the Three Pure Ones, the Four Emperors, the Five Ancients, the Six Superintendents, the Seven Main Stars, the Eight Points of the Compass, the Nine Bright Shiners, the Ten Chiefs, the Thousand Immortals, and the Ten Thousand Sages to a banquet to thank the Buddha for his mercy. Then he ordered the Four Great Heavenly Teachers and the Nine Heavenly Maidens to open the golden gates of the jade capital, and Palace of the Great Mystery, and the Tong Yang Jade Palace, invite the Tathagata to take his seat on the Throne of the Seven Precious Things, arrange the places for all the different groups of guests, and set out the dragon liver, phoenix bone －marrow, jade liquor, and magic peaches.

Before long the Original Celestial Jade Pure One, the High Celestial Precious Pure One, the Heavenly Celestial Pure One of the Way, the True Lords of the Five Humors, the Star Lords of the Five Constellations, the Three Officers, the Four Sages, the Left Assistant, the Right Support, the Heavenly Kings, Nezha, and the whole of space

responded to the invitations that had been sent out magically. Their standards and canopies came two by two as they brought shining pearls, rare jewels, fruit of longevity, and exotic flowers, and presented them to the Buddha with bows.

"We thank the Tathagata for subduing the monkey fiend with his infinite powers. His Celestial Majesty has asked us all to come to his banquet to express our thanks. We beg the Tathagata to give this banquet a title."

The Buddha accepted this commission and said, "Since you want a name for it, we could call it the 'Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven.'"

"Splendid, 'Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven,' splendid," exclaimed all the Immortals with one voice, and then they all sat down in their places, put flowers in their hair, and played the lyre. It was indeed a splendid banquet, and here are some verses to prove it:

The Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven far surpasses

The Banquet of Peaches that the monkey wrecked.

Radiance shines from dragon flags and imperial chariots;

Auspicious vapours float above streamers and symbols of office.

Melodious the fairy music and mysterious songs;

Loud sound the tones of phoenix flute and pipe of jade

The rarest of perfumes waft around the Immortals, assembled calm in the sky.

To congratulate the court on Pacifying the Universe.

When the Immortals were all enjoying the feast the Queen Mother and a group of fairies, immortal beauties, and houris, floated through the air as they danced towards the Buddha, and after paying her respects the Queen Mother said, "My Peach Banquet was ruined by that monkey fiend, and this Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven is being

given because the Tathagata has used his great powers to chain down the evil monkey. Having nothing else with which to express my gratitude, I have picked a number of peaches of immortality with my own pure hands as an offering." They were Half red, half green, sweet – smelling beauties

Growing every ten thousand years from immortal roots.

The peaches of Wulingyuan seem laughable:

How can they compare with those of Heaven?

Purple – veined and tender, rare even in the sky,

Yellow – stoned, and matchless on earth for their sweetness.

They are able to adapt the body and make it live for ever;

Those lucky enough to eat them are no ordinary beings.

Chapter 7

95

Journey to the West

The Buddha put his hands together to thank the Queen Mother, who instructed the fairies and houris to sing and dance again, and their performance met with the praises of the whole assembly. Indeed:
Misty heavenly incense filled the room;

A chaos of heavenly petals and flowers.

Great is the splendour of the jade city and golden gates,

Priceless the strange treasures and rare jewels.

Two by two, coeval with Heaven,

Pair by pair, outliving ten thousand kalpas:

Even if land and sea changed places

They would not be astonished or alarmed.

Soon after the Queen Mother had ordered the fairies and houris to sing and dance, and when wine cups and chopsticks were weaving to

and fro, suddenly

A strange scent reached their noses,

Startling the stars and constellations in the hall.

Immortals and the Buddha put down their cups,

Each of them raising their heads to look.

An old man appeared in the middle of the Milky Way

Holding a sacred mushroom.

His gourd contains ten – thousand – year elixir.

On the sacred rolls his name is written Eternal Life.

In his cave Heaven and Earth are free.

Chapter 7

96

Journey to the West

In his bottle Sun and Moon were created.

As he wanders around the Four Seas in pure idleness

Taking his ease in the Ten Continents, enjoying the bustle.

When he went to Peach Banquets he often got drunk

But when he came round, the moon was as bright as ever.

A long head, big ears and a short body,

Known as Longevity from the Southern Pole.

The Star of Longevity had arrived. When he had made his greetings to the Jade Emperor and the Buddha he made a speech of thanks.

"When I heard that the monkey fiend had been taken by the Lord Lao Zi to his Tushita palace to be refined I thought that this was bound to restore peace," he said, "and I never expected he would rebel again. Happily the demon was quelled by the Tathagata, and so when I heard that this feast was being given to thank him I came at once. As I have

nothing else to offer I have brought with me purple magic mushrooms, jasper herbs, greenish jade lotus – root, and golden pills of immortality: these I humbly present." The poem says Offering the jade louts – root and golden pills to Sakyamuni,

To give him as many years as the grains of sand of the Ganges.

Peace and eternal joy decorate the Three Vehicles;

Prosperity and eternal life make the nine grades of immortals glorious.

Within the gate of No – Phenomena the true Law rules;

Above the Heaven of Nothingness is his immortal home.

Heaven and Earth both call him their ancestor,

His golden body provides blessings and long life.

The Buddha happily accepted his thanks, and after the Star of Longevity had taken his place the wine – cups started to circulate once more. Then the Bare – foot Immortal appeared, kowtowed to the Jade Emperor, and Chapter 7

thanked the Buddha.

"I am deeply grateful to you for subduing the monkey fiend with your divine powers. As I have nothing else with which to express my respect, I offer you two magic pears and a number of fire – dates."

Sweet are the Bare – foot Immortal's pears and dates,

And long will be the life of the Buddha to whom they are offered.

The lotus seat of the seven treasures is as firm as a mountain, His thousand – golden – flower throne is as gorgeous as brocade.

Coeval with Heaven and Earth – – this is no lie;

It is true that his blessings are greater than a flood.

His Western Paradise of leisure and bliss

Truly provides all the long life and blessings one could hope.

The Buddha thanked him too, and telling Ananda and Kasyapa to collect together all the offerings he went over to the Jade Emperor to thank him for the banquet. When all the guests were thoroughly drunk the Miraculous Patrolling Officer reported that the Great Sage had poked his head out.

"It doesn't matter," the Buddha said, producing from his sleeve a strip of paper on which were written the golden words *Om mani padme hum.* He gave this piece of paper to Ananda and told him to stick it on the summit of the mountains. The Venerable Ananda took it through the gates of Heaven and pasted it firmly to a square boulder on the top of the Five Elements Mountain. When this was done the mountain sank roots and joined up all its seams. The Monkey King was still able to breathe and he could still stick his hands out and move them. Ananda went back to Heaven and reported that he had pasted the paper in place.

The Buddha then took his leave of the Jade Emperor and all the other deities. When he and his two disciples had gone out through the gates of Heaven his merciful heart moved him to chant a spell ordering a local tutelary god and the Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions to live on the mountain and keep guard over him. When he was hungry they were to feed him iron pellets, and when he was thirsty they were to give him molten copper to drink. When the time of his punishment was over, someone would come and rescue him.

Indeed:

The monkey fiend was bold enough to rebel against Heaven,

But was subdued by the Tathagata's hand.

Chapter 7

He endures the months and years, drinking molten copper for his thirst, And blunts his hunger on iron pellets, serving his time.

Suffering the blows of Heaven, he undergoes torment,

Yet even in the bleakest time a happy fate awaits.

If some hero is ready to struggle for him,

One year he will go to the West in the service of the Buddha.

Another poem goes:

His great power grew as he humbled the mighty,

He used his wicked talents to subdue tigers and dragons.

He stole the peaches and wine as he wandered round Heaven,

Was graciously given office in the Jade Capital.

When his wickedness went too far his body suffered,

But his roots of goodness were not severed, and his breath still rose.

He will escape from the hand of the Buddha,

And wait till the Tang produces a saintly monk.

It you don't know in what month of what year his sufferings ended, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 8

Our Buddha Creates the Scriptures and Passes on Perfect Bliss

Guanyin Obeys a Decree and Goes to Chang'an

If you try to ask about the dhyana

Or investigate the innumerable

You will waste your life and achieve nothing.

Polishing bricks to make mirrors,

Or piling up snow to turn it into grain— —

However many years have you wasted like that?

A hair can contain an ocean,

A mustard – seed can hold a mountain,

And the golden Kasyapa only smiles.

When you are awakened you will surpass the Ten Stages and the Three Vehicles, And stop the four kinds of birth and the six types of reincarnation.

Who has ever heard, before the cliff of thoughts extinguished, Under the tree that has no shadow,

The sound of the cuckoo in a spring dawn?

The path by the Cao Stream is dangerous,

The Vulture Peak is high in the clouds:

Here the voice of the ancients was a mystery.

On a cliff ten thousand feet high

Five – leaved lotuses bloom

As scent coils round the shutters of the old palace.

At that time

Your knowledge smashes all the currents of thought;

The Dragon King and the Three Treasures can be seen.

This lyric poem is set to the tune *Su Wu Man.* Our story goes on to how our Buddha, the Tathagata, left the Jade Emperor and went back to the Thunder Monastery, where he saw the three thousand Buddhas, five hundred Arhats, eight great Vajrapanis and countless Bodhisattvas standing under the pairs of sala trees at the foot of the Vulture Peak, all holding banners, canopies, jewels and magical flowers. The Tathagata brought his propitious cloud to a halt and addressed them thus:

"With my deep insight

I surveyed the Three Worlds.

The origin of nature

Is ultimately emptiness,

Like the great void,

Containing nothing at all.

The subjection of this evil monkey

Was a mystery beyond understanding.

It is called the beginning of life and death:

Such is the appearance of things.

When he had spoken a sacred light filled the sky with forty–two rainbows that linked North and South together. All who saw them bowed, and a moment later the Buddha gathered together some felicitous cloud and climbed to the supreme Lotus Throne, where he seated himself in majesty.

Then the three thousand Buddhas, the five hundred Arhats, the eight Vajrapanis and the four Bodhisattvas came forward to bow to him with their hands together and ask, "Who was it who wrecked the Heavenly Palace and ruined the Peach Banquet?"

"The wretch was a monkey fiend born on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit," the Buddha replied, "whose towering crimes would beggar description. None of the heavenly generals were able to subdue him, and when Lord Lao Zi refined him with fire after Erlang had captured him, he was unharmed. When I went there he was in the middle of the thunder generals, giving a great display of his martial prowess and his spirit. I stopped the fighting and asked him what it was all about. He said that he had divine powers, was able to do transformations, and could ride a somersault cloud for thirty–six thousand miles at a single jump. I made a wager with him that he could not jump out of my hand, then grabbed him, turned my fingers into the Five Elements Mountain, and sealed him under it. The Jade Emperor opened wide the golden gates of the Jade Palace, and invited me to be the guest of honour at a Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven he gave to thank me. After that I took my leave of him and came back here." They were

all delighted by the news and they congratulated him effusively, after which they withdrew group by group, each to go about his duties as all rejoiced in the divine truth. Indeed:

Propitious vapours filled Paradise,

Rainbows surround the Venerable One.

The Western Paradise, known as the best,

Is ruled by the dharma King of non—phenomenon.

Black apes are always offering fruit,

Deer hold flowers in their mouths;

Blue phoenixes dance,

Coloured birds call;

Sacred turtles offer long life,

Immortal cranes present magic mushrooms.

Here they peacefully enjoy the Pure Land of the Jetavana Park, The infinite realms of the Dragon Palace.

Every day flowers bloom,

Fruit is always ripe.

Through practicing silence they return to the truth,

Achieving reality by contemplation.

There is no birth nor death;

They neither wax nor wane.

Mists follow them as they come and go;

Untouched by heat or cold, they do not notice the years.

One day, as the Buddha dwelt in the Thunder Monastery on the Vulture Peak, he called together all the other Buddhas, Arhats, guardian deities, Bodhisattvas, Vajrapanis, monks and nuns and said, "As we are beyond time, I don't know how long it has been since the crafty ape was subdued and Heaven pacified, but by earthly reckoning it must be about five hundred years. As today is a fine early autumn day and I have a precious bowl filled with a hundred kinds of rare flowers and a thousand varieties of exotic fruit, what would you say to our having an Ullambana Feast?" They all put their hands together and performed the reverence of going round him three times in acceptance. The Buddha then ordered Ananda to hold the bowl of flowers and fruit while Kasyapa laid them out. The hosts were moved to gratitude, which they expressed in verse.

The poem on happiness went:

Chapter 8

The Star of Happiness shines bright before the Venerable One;

Gifts of happiness spread wide and deep, ever richer.

Fortune is boundless and lasts as long as the Earth;

A happy fate has the luck to be linked with Heaven.

Fields of happiness are widely sown and flourish every year;

The sea of happiness is mighty and deep, never changing.

Happiness fills Heaven and Earth, leaving legacies of happiness
Happiness grows beyond measure, eternally complete.

The poem on official rank went:

With rank as high as a mountain, coloured phoenixes call;

With rank ever increasing, we praise the evening star.

Salary raised to ten thousand bushels, and a healthy body;

Salary raised to a thousand tons, and the world at peace.

Rank and salary equaling Heaven, and eternal too;

Rank and fame as great as the sea, and even clearer.

Rank and favour continuing for ever, greatly to be admired;

Rank and nobility without bounds, like ten thousand kingdoms.

The poem on longevity went:

The Star of Longevity shines towards the Buddha;

The glories of the land of longevity start from here.

Fruits of longevity fill the bowls, glowing with good omen;

Longevity's flowers are newly plucked and placed on the lotus throne.

Poems of longevity, pure and elegant, full of rare conceits,

Songs of longevity sung with exquisite talent.

Life as long as sun and moon,

Life that will outlast both mountains and seas.

When the Bodhisattvas had presented all the poems they asked the Buddha to expound the fundamentals to them. Then the Tathagata opened his excellent mouth and expounded the great Law and retribution. He spoke about the wonderful scriptures of the Three Vehicles and the theory of the Five Aggregates as contained in the *Surangama－sutra;* the deities and nagas gathered round, and flowers came raining down in profusion. Indeed: The meditating heart shines like the moon in a thousand rivers; The true nature embraces ten thousand miles of sky.

When the Buddha had finished his sermon he said to the host, "I have observed that the morality of the living creatures of the four continents varies. In the Eastern Continent of Superior Body they worship Heaven and Earth, their minds are livery and they are even －tempered. In the Northern Kuru Continent they are given to killing

living things, but they only do it to feed themselves; they are stupid and lazy by nature, but they do not trample much on others. Our Western Continent of Cattle – gift has people who neither covet nor kill. They nourish the vital essence and submerge the spirit; and although they produce no saints of the highest order, they all live to a ripe old age. But in the Southern Jambu Continent they are greedy and lecherous and delight in the sufferings of others; they go in for a great deal of killing and quarrelling. That continent can with truth be called a vicious field of tongues and mouths, an evil sea of disputation. I now have Three Stores of True Scriptures with which they can be persuaded to be good."

On hearing this, all the Bodhisattvas put their hands together in submission, then went forward to ask, "What Three Stores of True Scriptures does the Tathagata have?"

"I have one store of the Vinaya, the law, which is about Heaven; one of Sastras, expositions which are concerned with Earth; and one of Sutras, or scriptures, which save ghosts. The Three Stores consist of fifteen thousand one hundred and forty – four scrolls in thirty – five classes. They are the scriptures for cultivating the truth, and the gate to real goodness. I want to send them to the Eastern lands because it is intolerable that the beings of that quarter should all be such stupid wretches who slander and defame the true word, do not understand the gist of my Law, and have lapsed from the orthodox Yogacara Sect. How am I to find one with the magic powers to go to the East, choose a worthy believer and bid him make the arduous crossing of a thousand mountain and ten thousand rivers in search of the scriptures until he finally comes to this abode of mine to receive them? When he does come they will be sent to the East for ever to convert all living beings, which will be a blessing as big as a mountain, a cause for congratulation as deep as the sea. Is anyone willing to go and find him?"

Chapter 8

104

Journey to the West

The Bodhisattva Guanyin went up to the lotus throne, and after going round the Buddha three times by way of salutation she said, "Your untalented disciple wishes to go to the East to find a man to come and fetch the scriptures." All present raised their heads to look at the Bodhisattva: Her understanding filling out the four virtues,

Wisdom filling her golden body.

From her necklace hang pearls and jade,

Her bracelet is made of jewels.

Her hair is black clouds skillfully piled like coiling dragons; Her embroidered girdle lightly sways, a phoenix wing.

Seagreen jade buttons,

A gown of white silk gauze,

Bathed with sacred light;

Brocade skirts,

A girdle of gold,

Shielded by propitious vapours.

Eyebrows like crescent moons,

Eyes like a pair of stars.

A jade face full of heavenly happiness,

Scarlet lips making a touch of red.

Her pure bottle of sweet dew is ever full,

The willow twigs in it are always green.

She delivers from the eight disasters,

Saves all living beings,

Great is her compassion.

She stays on Mount Tai,

Lives in the Southern Sea,

Rescues the suffering when she bears their cries,

Never failing to answer every call,

Infinitely divine and miraculous.

Her orchid heart admires the purple bamboo;

Her orchid nature loves the fragrant creeper.

She is the merciful ruler of Potaraka Island,

The living Guanyin of the Tide Cave.

The Buddha was very pleased to see her.

"No one but the venerable Guanyin, whose divine powers are so great, will do for this mission," he said.

"What instructions have you for your disciple as she goes to the East?" Guanyin asked.

"You must watch the route all the way," said the Buddha. "You may not go via the Milky Way, but if necessary you may have a little cloud or mist. As you cross mountains and rivers you must note the distances carefully to enable you to give full instructions to the man who will come to fetch the scriptures. But that true believer will, I'm afraid, have a difficult journey, so I shall give you five treasures for him." The Buddha ordered Ananda and Kasyapa to bring out a brocade cassock and a nine–ringed monk's staff.

"Give this cassock and staff to him who will come to fetch the scriptures: they are for him to use. If he is determined to come here, he can avoid the Wheel of Reincarnation by wearing this cassock, and he will be free from evil if he carries this staff." The Bodhisattva bowed and took them. The Buddha then produced three bands.

"These precious things are called 'tight bands,'" he told the Bodhisattva as he handed them to her. "Although all three of them look the same, they have different uses. I also have three Band–Tightening Spells. If you meet any devils with great magic powers on your journey you should persuade them to reform and become the disciples of the pilgrim who will come to fetch the scriptures. If they do not do is they are told these bands should be put on their heads, where they will of themselves take root in the flesh. If the appropriate spell for each one is recited the victim's eyes will bulge, his head will ache, and his

forehead will split open. He will thus be certainly induced to adopt our religion."

When he finished speaking the Bodhisattva bowed eagerly and withdrew. She told Huian the Novice to accompany her, and he took his iron staff weighing a thousand pounds with him so that he could as a demon－quelling strongman for the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva wrapped the cassock up in a bundle and gave it to him to carry. She then put the golden bands away safely and went down the Vulture Peak with the staff in her hand. This journey was to have consequences:

The Buddha's disciple comes back to his original vow;

Chapter 8

106

Journey to the West

The Venerable Golden Cicada is dressed in sandalwood.

When the Bodhisattva reached the foot of the mountain the Gold －headed Immortal of the Jade Truth Temple stopped her at the temple gate and invited her to take some tea. But she dared not stop for long, and so she said, "I have been given a sacred command by the Tathagata to go to the East and find a man who will come to fetch the scriptures."

"When will he arrive?" the Immortal asked.

"It is not definite," the Bodhisattva replied, "but he will probably reach here in two or three years' time." She took her leave of the Immortal and as she traveled amid cloud and mist she estimated the distances. There are some verses to prove it:

She cared nothing of the journey of ten thousand miles to find him,
But worried about finding the right man.

Looking for the man seemed to be very chancy,

But how can it be a mere coincidence?

One who teaches the Way for the wrong motives will distort it; He who explains it without faith will preach in vain.

Whoever will try and know it with his whole being,

Is bound to have a future ahead of him.

As the teacher and her disciple were on their journey they suddenly noticed a thousand miles of weak water, which was the River of Flowing Sands.

"Disciple," said the Bodhisattva, "this will be hard to cross for the man who will come to fetch the scriptures, as he will be of impure bone and mortal flesh. How will he do it?"

"Teacher, how wide does the river look to you?" asked Huian. The Bodhisattva stopped her cloud to investigate. She saw:

Joining up with the deserts to the East,

Reaching the foreign kingdoms in the West,

Wuge in the South

The Tatars in the North.

It was about three hundred miles across,

And three million miles long.

As the waters flowed it was like the earth turning over,

The waves were like rearing mountains.

Broad and boundless,

Vast and mighty:

From three miles' distance the mighty flood is heard.

Immortals' rafts do not reach here,

Lotus leaves cannot float on it.

The sun slants through withered plants and bathes the crooked shore;
Brown clouds block its light and darken the long bank.

How could merchants pass this way?

Has a fisherman ever moored here?

No geese alight on the sandbanks,

But apes cry on the distant shore.

Its color comes from bountiful red smartweed,

While delicate white duckweed drifts together.

As the Bodhisattva was surveying the scene she heard a splash and saw a hideous ogre leap out of the waves.

He was

Not really blue,

Not really black,

With an evil face;

Chapter 8

108

Journey to the West

Neither tall,

Nor short,

Bare legs and a muscular body.

His eyes flashed

Like a pair of tortoise – shell lanterns;

The comers of his mouth were as sinister

As a butcher's cauldron.

Protruding fangs like swords,

Red hair, matted and unkempt.

He roared like a clap of thunder,

And ran across the waves with the speed of wind.

This ogre climbed up the bank with a pole in his hands to catch the Bodhisattva, but was stopped by Huian's staff.

"Don't run away," Huian shouted as the ogre advanced towards him. The battle that ensued between them was quite terrifying:

Moksa with his iron club,

Using his divine powers to protect the Bodhisattva;

The ogre with his demon – quelling pole

Displaying his valour for all be was worth.

A pair of silver dragons dancing by the river;

Two holy monks in battle on the bank.

The one used his skill to control the River of Flowing Sands

The other had distinguished himself in protecting Guanyin.

The one could make the waves leap and roll,

The other could breathe out fogs and gales.

Chapter 8

When the waves leapt and rolled, Heaven and Earth were darkened; In the fogs and gales, sun and moon were dimmed.

The demon – quelling pole

Was like a white tiger coming down from the mountain;

The iron club

Was like a crouching yellow dragon.

When one goes into action

It beats the undergrowth to start the snakes;

When the other lashes out,

It parts the pines to flush the sparrowhawks.

They fight till the sky goes dark

And the stars twinkle.

Then the mist rises,

And earth and sky are dim.

The one has long been unrivalled in the Weak Waters;

The other has always been the hero of Vulture Peak.

When the pair of them had fought several dozen rounds inconclusively the ogre blocked his opponent's iron staff and asked, "Where are you from, monk, that you dare to take me on?"

"I am Prince Moksa, the second son of the Pagoda–bearing Heavenly King Li," the other replied. "I am also Huian the Novice. I am now protecting my teacher on her journey to the East to find the man who will fetch the scriptures. Which monster are you? How dare you stand in our way?" The ogre then realized who he was.

"I remember," he said, "you used to cultivate your conduct with Guanyin of the Southern Sea in the Purple Bamboo Grove. Why have you come here?"

"Can't you see my teacher standing there on the bank?"

When the ogre heard this he chanted "na–a–aw" several times to show his respect, withdrew his pole and let Moksa seize it. Then he bowed to Guanyin and said, "Forgive me, Bodhisattva, and listen to what I have to tell you. I am not a demon, but the Curtain Raising General who used to stand in attendance by the imperial chariot in the Hall of Miraculous Mist. Just because I accidentally smashed a crystal dish at a Peach Banquet the Jade Emperor had me given eight hundred strokes of the rod, exiled me to the lower world, and made me Chapter 8

look like this. And on top of it all every seven days he sends a flying

sword here to stab my chest over a hundred times before it goes back again. It's agony. I get so unbearably cold and hungry that I have to emerge from the waves every two or three days to devour a traveler. I never thought that in my ignorance I would insult the merciful Bodhisattva today."

"You were exiled here for a crime against Heaven, but now you are deepening your guilt by harming living beings. I am now going to the East on the Buddha's orders to find the man who will fetch the scriptures. Why don't you become one of us and ensure yourself good retribution in future by accompanying the pilgrim as a disciple and ascending to the Western Heaven to pay homage to the Buddha and seek the scriptures? I will see to it that the flying sword stops coming to pierce you, and when you are successful you will be forgiven your crimes and your old job will be given back to you. What do you think of that?"

"I am willing to return to the truth," the ogre replied, then went closer as he continued, "Bodhisattva, I have lost count of the number of people I have eaten here, and I have even devoured some pilgrims who were trying to fetch scriptures. I throw the heads of all my victims into the river, and they all sink to the bottom as not even goose－down will float on this water. But the skeletons of those nine pilgrims floated and would not sink. I was so impressed by this that I threaded them together with rope and play with them in my spare time.

But I am afraid that the man who is to fetch the scriptures may not get this far, which would wreck my future."

"Of course he'll get here," the Bodhisattva replied. "You should hang those skeletons from your head and wait for him. They will come in useful."

"In that case," the ogre said, "I shall await your instructions." The Bodhisattva then laid her hands on his head and administered the monastic rules to him, chose for him the surname Sha ("Sand") and gave him the Buddhist name of Wujing ("Awakened to Purity"). Then he entered monkish life and took the Bodhisattva across the river. He washed his heart, cleansed his thoughts, and stopped killing living creatures. All he did now was to wait for the pilgrim who would come to fetch the scriptures.

After leaving him the Bodhisattva and Huian hurried on towards the East. When they had been travelling for a long time they saw a high

mountain veiled with an evil mist, and they were unable to climb it on foot. Just when they were intending to cross the mountain by cloud, a gale wind blew up and a monster suddenly appeared. He too was very menacing to behold:

His entrails hung from his mouth, rolled up and knotted;

His ears were like rush fans, his eyes shone gold.

His teeth were sharp as steel files,

And when he opened his mouth it was like a brazier.

His golden helmet was tied firmly round his cheeks;

His armour, bound with a silken sash, was a python's sloughed – off skin.

In his hands he held a nailed rake like a dragon's claw,

At his waist hung a curved bow the shape of a half – moon.

Chapter 8

111

Journey to the West

His martial might overawed the Year Planet;

His overweening spirit threatened the heavenly gods.

He rushed upon them, and without a second thought smote at the Bodhisattva with his rake. Moksa the Novice parried his blow, and shouted at the top of his voice, "Remember your manners, damned monster, and watch out for my staff."

"Monk," the other replied, "you don't know how to keep yourself in one piece. Mind my rake!" At the foot of the mountain the pair of them rushed upon each other as they struggled for supremacy. It was a fine battle: The fierce and murderous ogre;

Huian, imposing and able.

The iron staff could pulverize the heart;

The rake struck at the face.

The dust thrown up darkened Heaven and Earth;

The flying sand and stones startled gods and ghouls.

The nine – toothed rake

Gleamed and flashed

As its pair of rings resounded;

The lone staff

Was ominously black

As it whirled in its owner's hands.

One was the heir of a Heavenly King,

One defended the Law on Potaraka Island.

The other was an evil fiend in a mountain cave.

In their battle for mastery,

None knew who the winner would be.

Chapter 8

112

Journey to the West

Just when the fight was getting really good, Guanyin threw down a lotus flower from mid – air to separate the two weapons. The monster, shocked at the sight of it, asked, "Where are you from, monk? How dare you try to fool me with a 'flower in front of the eyes?'"

"I'll get you, you stinking, flesh – eyed mortal," replied Moksa. "I am a disciple of the Bodhisattva of the Southern Sea, and this lotus was thrown down by her. Don't you know that?"

"By the Bodhisattva of the Southern Sea do you mean Guanyin Who Eliminates the Three Calamities and Saves from the Eight Disasters?" the monster asked.

"Who else could I mean?" retorted Moksa. The monster threw down his rake, bowed to him, and asked,

"Where is the Bodhisattva, elder brother? May I trouble you to introduce me?" Moksa looked up and pointed.

"There she is," he said. The monster kowtowed to her and shouted in a shrill voice, "Forgive me, Bodhisattva, forgive me." Guanyin brought her cloud down to earth, went over to him and asked, "Are you a wild boar become a devil or a pig turned monster? How dare you block my way?"

"I'm neither a wild boar nor a pig," the monster replied. "I used to be Marshal Tian Peng in the Milky Way.

Because I took some wine to seduce the moon maiden, the Jade Emperor sentenced me to two thousand hammer blows and exile in the mortal world. My spirit had to find a womb to occupy, but I lost my way and entered the womb of a sow. That's why I look like this. I ate up my sow mother, drove all the other pigs away, and seized this mountain, where I keep myself by eating people. I never meant to offend you, Bodhisattva.

Save me, save me, I beg you."

"What is this mountain called?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"It's called the Mount of Blessing, and the cave in it is called the Cloud Pathway Cave. Second Sister Luan, who used to live there, saw that I knew how to fight and asked me to be the head of her household as her husband, but she died within a year and all her property became mine. As the days lengthened into years I found that I had no way of supporting myself, so I had to eat people to keep myself going as I had done before. Forgive me my sins, I beg of you, Bodhisattva."

"There is an old saying," the Bodhisattva replied, "that goes, 'If you want to have a future, don't do anything with no future in it?' You broke the law in the upper world, and since then your vicious nature has not been reformed. You have further sinned by taking life, so this surely means that you will be doubly punished."

"Future!" said the monster angrily. "According to you I should have lived on air! As the saying goes, 'By the government's law you're beaten to death, and by the Buddha's law you starve to death.' Clear off! Clear off! If you don't I'll capture this pilgrim and eat this plump and tender old woman. I don't give a hoot if it's double sinning, triple sinning, or sinning a thousand or ten thousand times over."

"'If a man wishes to be good, Heaven will certainly allow him to be,'"

said the Bodhisattva. "If you are prepared to submit to the truth, there are of course, ways to feed yourself. There are the five kinds of food —grains, and they are sufficient to assuage hunger, so why eat people to keep alive?"

When the monster heard these words it was as if he awoke from a dream, and he said to the Bodhisattva, "I would love to reform, but isn't it true that 'a sinner against Heaven has nowhere to pray to?'"

"I'm going to the East on the orders of the Buddha to find the man who will fetch the scriptures," she replied.

"You can be a disciple of his and make this journey to the Western Heaven; thus you will gain merit and atone for your crimes, and I will see to it that you are freed from disaster."

"I'll go with him, I'll go with him," the monster said over and over again. The Bodhisattva then laid her hands on his head and he accepted the monastic rules. She gave him the surname Zhu ("Pig") because of his appearance, and gave him the Buddhist name Zhu Wuneng ("Pig Awakened to Power"). She ordered him to adhere to the truth and eat only vegetarian food, cutting out the five pungent vegetables as well as the three forbidden things; wild goose, dog and fish. He was now to wait single—mindedly for the pilgrim who would come to fetch the scriptures.

The Bodhisattva and Moksa then took their leave of the Pig Awakened to Power and continued on their way by low—altitude cloud. As they were travelling along they heard a jade dragon call to them in mid —air.

"Which dragon are you?" the Bodhisattva asked as she went up to him. "And why are you undergoing punishment here?"

"I am the son of Ao Run, the Dragon King of the Western Sea. Because I burnt up the bright pearls in the palace, my father reported me to the court of Heaven as a rebel. The Jade Emperor had me hung up in mid—air and given three hundred strokes, and I am to be executed any day now. I beg you to save me, Bodhisattva."

When she heard his plea the Bodhisattva went in through the Southern Gates of Heaven with Moksa. Here they were met by the Heavenly Teachers Qiu and Zhang, who asked them, "Where are you going?"

"I would like an audience with the Jade Emperor." The two Heavenly Teachers hurried in to announce her, and the Jade Emperor came out of his palace to receive her. The Bodhisattva went forward to greet him and said, "On my way to the East on the orders of the Buddha to find the man to fetch the scriptures, I met a wicked dragon suspended in mid–air.. I have come here especially to ask you to spare his life and give him to me so that I can teach him to serve the pilgrim with his legs." On hearing this the Jade Emperor issued a decree pardoning him, and he sent a heavenly general to release him and give him to the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva thanked him for his generosity and left. The young dragon kowtowed to show how grateful he was for having his life spared, and he obediently did what the Bodhisattva told him to. She took him to a deep ravine, where he was to wait until the pilgrim came. When that happened he was to turn into a white horse and achieve merit by going to the Western Heaven. On receiving his orders the young dragon hid himself.

The Bodhisattva led Moksa the Novice across this mountain, and they hurried on towards the East. Before they had gone much further they suddenly saw ten thousand beams of golden light and a thousand wisps of propitious vapour.

"Teacher," said Moksa, "the place where all the light is coming from is the Five Elements Mountain, where the Tathagata's restriction order is posted."

"This must be cause that Great Sage Equaling Heaven who wrecked the Peach Banquet and threw the Heavenly Palace into chaos is imprisoned there."

"That's right," Moksa replied, and teacher and pupil climbed the mountain together to look at the paper. On it were written the true words *Om mani padme bum,* and when the Bodhisattva saw them she sighed deeply and composed a poem that went:

"Pity the evil monkey who did not obey the lord

In his arrogance he showed off his valour in the old days,

In his folly he wrecked the Peach Banquet,

And he had the effrontery to sin in the Tushita Palace.

In the army of a hundred thousand there was none to match him; His might was felt above the ninefold heavens.

But now he has been caught by our Tathagata, the Buddha:

Will he ever be able to unleash his talents and win more glory?"

The conversation between teacher and disciple had disturbed the Great Sage, who shouted from under the roots of the mountain, "Who's that up there?" When she heard this the Bodhisattva hurried down the mountain to visit him. At the foot of the mountainside the local gods, the mountain gods and the heavenly generals who were guarding the Great Sage all bowed to the Bodhisattva in greeting and took her to the Great Sage. She saw that he was pressed down inside a stone box, so that he could speak but could not move his body.

"Monkey," the Bodhisattva said, "do you know who I am?" The Great Sage opened wide his fiery eyes with their golden pupils, nodded his head and shouted at the top of his voice, "Of course I recognize you. You, thank goodness, are the All－Compassionate. All－Merciful Deliverer from Suffering, the Bodhisattva Guanyin from Potaraka Island in the Southern Sea. You're a very welcome visitor. Every day here seems like a year, and nobody I know has ever come to see me. Where have you come from?"

"I have received a mandate from the Buddha to go to the East and find the man who will fetch the scriptures,"

she replied, "and as I was passing this way I decided to come over and see you."

"The Buddha fooled me and crushed me under this mountain－－I haven't been able to stretch myself for five hundred years. I desperately hope that you will be obliging enough to rescue me, Bodhisattva."

"You wretch," she replied, "you have such an appalling criminal record that I'm afraid you'd only make more trouble if I got you out."

"I have already repented," he said, "and hope that you will show me the road I should follow. I want to cultivate my conduct." Indeed:

When an idea is born in a man's mind

It is known throughout Heaven and Earth.

If good and evil are not rewarded and punished

The world is bound to go to the bad.

The Bodhisattva was delighted to hear what he had to say.

"The sacred scriptures say," she replied, "'If one's words are good, they will meet with a response from even a thousand miles away; if they are bad, they will be opposed from the same distance.' If this is your state of mind, then wait while I go to the East to find the man who will fetch the scriptures; I'll tell him to rescue you.

You can be his disciple, observe and uphold the faith, enter our Buddha's religion, and cultivate good retribution for yourself in the future. What do you say to that?"

"I'll go, I'll go," the Great Sage repeated over and over again.

"As you have reformed," she said, "I'll give you a Buddhist name."

"I've already got a name. It's Sun Wukong." The Bodhisattva, very pleased, said, "I made two converts earlier, and their names both contained Wu ('Awakened'). There's no need to give you any further instructions, so I'll be off." The Great Sage, now aware of his own Buddha–nature, was converted to the Buddha's religion; and the Bodhisattva devotedly continued her search for a saintly monk.

After leaving that place she and Huian carried straight on to the East, and before long they reached Chang'an, the capital of the Great Tang. Putting away their mists and clouds, teacher and pupil turned themselves into a pair of scabby itinerant monks and went inside the city of Chang'an. It was already dark, and beside the great market street they saw a shrine to a local tutelary god and went in. The local god was thrown into confusion at the sight of them, and the devil

soldiers quaked with terror; they knew that she was a Bodhisattva, and kowtowed to her in greeting. The local god then scurried off to tell the City God, the Lord of the Alter, and the gods of all the other shrines in Chang'an. When they knew that the Bodhisattva had come they all went to report to her and said, "Bodhisattva, please forgive us for our crime in being late to welcome you."

"You mustn't let a whisper of this get out," she said. "I have come here on a decree from the Buddha to find someone to fetch the scriptures. I shall be borrowing your temple for a few days while I find this true monk, and then I shall go back." All the gods returned to their own shrines, and they took the local god to stay in the temple of the City God. Teacher and disciple disguised their true appearances. If you don't know whom they found to fetch the scriptures, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 9

Chen Guangrui Comes to Grief on His Way to His Post

The Monk of the River Current Avenges His Parents

The story goes on to tell that Chang'an city in the great land of Shaanxi had been a place where emperors and kings had made their capitals for generation after generation. Ever since the Zhou, Qin and Han dynasties, the Three Prefectures had been as rich as brocade, and the eight rivers had flowed round its walls. It was indeed a famous country. At that time Emperor Taizong of the Great Tang was on the throne. He had changed the name of the reign－period to *Zhenguan,* and had been reigning for thirteen years. The year was *ji si* and the world was at peace; tribute was being sent in from the eight directions, and all within the four seas acknowledged themselves as subjects.

One day Taizong took his seat on the throne and assembled all his military and civilian officials. When they had finished making their greetings, the minister Wei Zheng came forward from the ranks of officials and memorialized, "As the world is now at peace and the eight directions are calm, an examination should be held in accordance with the practice of the ancients. Thus we could recruit wise scholars and select men of talent to Chapter 9

help with our civilizing mission."

"The suggestion of our wise minister is right," said the Emperor, and notices inviting worthy men to compete in the examinations were posted throughout the empire. All the Confucian scholars on the civil or military rolls in every prefecture, district and county who had distinguished themselves in the three－stage examinations for their understanding of literature were to go to Chang'an for a final test.

When this notice reached the district of Haizhou it was seen by a man called Chen E, whose courtesy name was Guangrui. He returned home and said to Madame Zhang, his mother, "The court has issued a yellow notice saying that the Chancellery will be opened for an examination to select men of wisdom and talent.

Your child wants to go and take part. If I am given an official post it will bring me fame and make our family illustrious; my wife will be given a title, my sons will be given preferential treatment; and it will bring glory to our house. Such is my ambition; and I have come to tell you, mother, that I am going."

"You are a scholar, my son," his mother replied, "and it is right that 'one who studies when young should travel when grown up'. But do take care on the journey to the examinations, and if you are given office, come back home as soon as you can." Chen Guangrui then ordered his servants to get his luggage together, took his leave of his mother, and started off on his journey. When he reached Chang'an the examination grounds were open and he went in. Having been successful in this examination, he went to the palace for the three questions test. The Tang Emperor personally awarded him the first place, and he was paraded round the streets on horseback for three days.

It happened that just when the procession was passing the gateway of the minister Yin Kaishan, the minister's unmarried daughter Wenqiao, whose other name was Man－tang－qiao (Beauty Throughout the Hall), was making decorations for the house and throwing an embroidered ball to see who her future husband would be.

When Chen Guangrui passed below she saw at once that he was exceptionally handsome, and she knew that he had come first in the recent examinations. She was thoroughly taken with him, and when she dropped her embroidered ball it landed squarely on his black hat. To the sound of pipes and flutes a dozen or so maidservants and serving women hurried downstairs to take hold of the head of Chen

Guangrui's horse and invite him into the minister's mansion to marry his daughter. The minister and his wife came into the main hall, and when they had called for a master of ceremonies they married their daughter to Guangrui. When bride and groom had bowed to Heaven, Earth and each other they both bowed to the bride's father and mother.

The minister ordered a banquet, and there was a night of drinking and celebration. The bride and groom went hand in hand into the bridal chamber.

At the third quarter of the fifth watch the next morning Emperor Taizong took his throne in the Golden Chariot Hall, and the civil and military officials came to court.

"What office should Chen Guangrui who came top in the examinations be given?" the Emperor asked, and the minister Wei Zheng replied, "Your subject has gone through the list of the prefectures and commanderies, and found that the district of Jiangzhou needs a prefect. I beg Your Majesty to give him this office." The Emperor therefore appointed him prefect of Jiangzhou and ordered him to pack his belongings and set off as he had to be there by a set date. Chen Guangrui thanked the Emperor for his grace and withdrew. He went back to the minister's mansion and consulted his wife, then he took his leave of his parents – in – law and set off together with her for his post in Jiangzhou.

It was late spring as they left Chang'an at the start of their journey. Warm breezes were coaxing the willows into green, and light rain was touching the blossoms with red. Chen Guangrui was able to call at his own home on the way, so he and his bride could pay their respects to his mother, Madame Zhang.

"Congratulations, my son," she said. "And you have brought a bride back with you too."

"Thanks to my mother's blessings, your son was placed first in the examinations," he replied, "and given a parade through the streets on His Majesty's orders. As I was passing the gateway of minister Yin's residence, I happened to be hit by an embroidered ball, and the

minister was kind enough to give me his daughter's hand.

The court has appointed me prefect of Jiangzhou, so I have come to fetch you, mother, and take you with me to my post." Madame Zhang was overjoyed, and she packed her luggage and traveled with them.

One night, after they had been on the road for several days, they put up at the Liu the Second's Ten Thousand Flowers Inn, where Madame Zhang was suddenly taken ill.

"As I'm not feeling well," she said to her son, "I'd better stay in this inn for a couple of days to get over it before going on." Chen Guangrui accepted her suggestion. The next morning he saw a man selling a golden – coloured carp in front of the inn and brought it from him for a string of copper coins, intending to have it lightly fried for his mother. Then he noticed it blinking.

"It's said that if a fish or a snake blinks it is no ordinary creature," he thought. He asked the fisherman where he had caught it.

"In the Hongjiang River, five miles from the prefectural capital," the fisherman replied. Chen Guangrui had the fish taken back to the Hongjiang River to be released there, then went back to the inn to tell his mother about what had happened.

"It is good to release living things," his mother said, "and I am very pleased." Then Chen Guangrui said, "We have been at this inn for three days, and the time limit set for me is a tight one, so I must be on my way tomorrow morning. Are you well enough yet, mother?"

"I'm still poorly," his mother replied, "and it's so hot to travel now that I'm afraid it might make me seriously ill. You had better take a couple of rooms for me and leave me some money; I'll stay here for the time being.

You two can go on ahead to your post. Come back to fetch me in the autumn when it's cooler." Having discussed it with his wife he rented a wing for her and gave her some money, then they took their leave of her and set off.

It was a hard journey, setting off every day at dawn and not stopping till nightfall, and before they realized it they reached the ford over the Hongjiang Estuary. They saw two boatmen, Liu Hong and Li Biao, punt their ferry to the bank for them. This was the disaster, these were the enemies, that Chen Guangrui had been fated to meet ever since before he was born. He told his servant to put the luggage on board,

while he and his wife climbed sedately into the boat. Liu Hong stared at Miss Yin, and saw that her face was like a full moon, her eyes like autumn waves, her tiny mouth like a cherry, and her waist as supple as a willow; her charms would have made fishes sink and wild geese fall from the sky, and her beauty put moon and flowers to shame. Evil thoughts surged up in him, and he conspired with Li Biao to punt the boat to a misty and deserted place and wait till the middle of the night, when they killed first the servant and then Chen Guangrui. They pushed both the corpses into the river and went away.

When the young lady saw her husband killed she tried to fling herself into the water, but Liu Hong put his arms round her and said, "If you come with me, you'll be all right; but if you don't, I'll cut you in half." Unable to think of any other way out, the young lady had to agree to stay with Liu Hong for the time being at least.

The murderer took the boat across to the Southern bank and gave it to Li Biao. Then he dressed up in Chen Guangrui's clothes and, armed with the dead man's credentials, went with the young lady to take up his post in Jiangzhou.

The corpse of the murdered servant floated with the current, but Chen Guangrui's body sank straight to the bottom and did not move. A patrolling yaksha demon stationed at the Hongjiang Estuary saw him and rushed Chapter 9

straight back to the dragon palace to report. He arrived just as the dragon king was entering the throne—hall.

"Someone has murdered a learned gentleman at the Hongjiang Estuary, and thrown the body into the bed of the river," he reported. The dragon king had the body brought in and laid in front of him. After examining it carefully he said, "This is the benefactor who saved my life: why has he been murdered? As the saying goes,

'Always repay a kindness'. I must save his life today to repay him for the favour he did me in the past." He wrote a memorandum and sent a yaksha with it to the city god and local god of Hongzhou asking for the scholar's soul so that he could save his life. The city god and the local god told a junior devil to give Chen Guangrui's soul to the yaksha, who took it back to the palace of crystal and reported to the dragon king.

"What is your name, scholar?" asked the dragon king. "Where are you from? What brought you here, and why were you killed?"

Chen Guangrui bowed to him and replied, "My name is Chen E and my courtesy name is Guangrui. I come from Hongnong County in Haizhou Prefecture. I was given first place in the recent examinations, and was on my way with my wife to take up my post as prefect of Jiangzhou when we boarded a ferry at the bank of this river. The boatman Liu Hong lusted after my wife, so he killed me and threw me overboard. I beg you to save me, Your Majesty."

"So that's how things stand," said the dragon king. "I am the golden carp you released. You saved me then, so I must help you now that you are in trouble." He had Guangrui's body placed beside a wall and put a "Face Preserving Pearl" in its mouth to stop it from decomposing so that the soul could be returned to it in future for him to obtain his revenge. "As you are now a true soul, you shall stay in my palace for the time being as a commander," the dragon king added. Chen Guangrui kowtowed in thanks, and the dragon king gave a banquet to welcome him.

Miss Yin's hatred for the villainous Liu Hong was such that she wished she could eat his flesh and spread his flayed hide on her bed, but as she was pregnant and the child had not yet been born she had to force herself to go with him. In the twinkling of an eye they reached Jiangzhou. The clerks and constables all turned out to welcome him, and the subordinate officials in the prefecture gave a banquet for him in the main hall of his office.

"Now that I, your student, have come here, I shall be entirely dependent on the support of all you gentlemen,"

said Liu Hong.

"Your honour is a great genius," the officials replied, "and you will naturally treat the people as your own children, thus cutting down litigation and making punishment unnecessary. We will all be able to rely on you——your excessive modesty is uncalled for." When the banquet was over they all went away.

Time flew by. One day, when Liu Hong was far away on official business, the young lady was in a summerhouse in the official residence sighing sadly as she thought of her mother-in-law and her husband.

Suddenly she felt weak and her belly started to ache. She fell to the

ground unconscious, and before she knew it she gave birth to a son. She heard a voice in her ear saying, "Man－tang－qiao, you must do as I tell you. I am the Lord of the Southern Pole Star, and I have come to give you this son on the orders of the Bodhisattva Guanyin. One day he will be extraordinarily famous. When the villainous Liu comes back he will certainly want to kill this boy, so you must look after him with great care. Your husband has been rescued by the dragon king; one day you will be reunited with him and your son, and your sufferings will be at an end.

Remember my words. Wake up, wake up!"

When the young lady came to she remembered every word he had spoken, but as she wrapped the baby tight in swaddling clothes, she could not think what to do. When Liu Hong came back he wanted to drown the child Chapter 9

the moment he saw him, but the young lady said, "It's already dark: we can throw him in the river tomorrow."

Fortunately Liu Hong had to go a long way away on urgent business the next day.

"If I wait till that villain returns my son will be killed," thought the young lady, "so the best thing would be to abandon him in the river as soon as possible and let fate determine whether he is to live or do die. If Heaven is merciful someone will rescue the boy and bring him up, and we shall be reunited one day." Then, worrying that she might not be able to recognize him, she bit open her finger and wrote a letter in blood giving a full account of his parentage and background. Then she bit off the little toe of the child's left foot to be an identifying mark, wrapped him up in one of her own shifts, and carried him out of the official residence when nobody was looking. Luckily the residence was not far from the river bank. When she reached it she wept for a while and was just going to throw him in when she noticed a board floating beside the bank. The young lady bowed to Heaven in her gratitude and tied the child to the board with her sash, placing the blood letter next to his chest. Then she pushed him out into the stream to go where he would and returned to the yamen in tears.

The boy floated downstream on the plank until he came to a stop under the Jinshan Temple. The abbot of this temple was a monk

called Faming who by cultivating the Truth and being awakened to the Way had found the secret of avoiding rebirth. As he was sitting at his meditation he heard a baby crying, and he hurried anxiously down to the riverside to look. He saw a baby lying on a board beside the bank, and got him out of the water as quickly as he could. When he read the letter written in blood that was on the baby's chest he knew why he was there. He gave the child the milk – name Jiangliu, "River Current," and arranged for him to be fostered. The letter in blood he put away in a very safe place. Time passed like an arrow, and the days and months moved as fast as a shuttle. When Jiangliu reached the age of seventeen the abbot told him to have his head tonsured and enter the religious life. Giving him the Buddhist name Xuanzang he laid his hands upon his head and instructed him to observe the monastic discipline. Xuanzang was determined to cultivate the Way.

One day in late spring the whole community gathered under the shade of some pine trees to expound the scriptures, meditate and discuss the inner mysteries. A bibulous, meat – eating monk who had been confounded in a disputation by Xuanzang lost his temper and started to abuse him: "You animal, you don't know your own surname or who your parents were. Don't try any of your clever tricks here." Stung by this abuse, Xuanzang went into the temple and knelt before his teacher with tears streaming from his eyes.

"All men who are born between Heaven and Earth, and who are endowed with the Positive, the Negative, and the Five Elements – – all are begotten by a father and reared by a mother," he said. "How can there be any man alive who never had father and mother?" He begged over and over again to know his parents' names.

"If you really wish to find out about your father and mother, come with me into my cell," said the abbot, and they went there together. The abbot lifted down a little box from on top of a massive beam, opened it, took out a letter written in blood and a shift, and gave them to Xuanzang, who unfolded the letter and read it. At last he learned about his parents and the wrongs they had suffered.

When he had read it he collapsed, weeping and crying out, "How can I be a man if I don't avenge my father and mother? For seventeen years I haven't known my own parents, but now I know that I have a mother. I would not be alive today, teacher, had you not rescued me and brought me up. Please allow me to go and see my mother, then I will put an incense – burner on my head and rebuild the temple to repay the great kindness you have shown me."

"If you want to go and look for your mother you had better take the letter written in blood and the shift with you. If you go to the private residence of the prefect of Jiangzhou you will be able to see your mother."

Chapter 9

120

Journey to the West

Xuanzang did as his teacher had said and went to Jiangzhou as a mendicant monk. It happened that Liu Hong was away on business, and as Heaven had arranged for mother and son to meet, Xuanzang went straight to the gateway of the residence to beg for alms. Miss Yin had dreamt the previous night of the moon being eclipsed and then coming back to its full roundness.

"I have never heard from my mother–in–law," she thought, "and my husband was murdered by that evil man.

My son was abandoned on the river, and if he was rescued and brought up, he would be seventeen now. Who knows, perhaps Heaven is going to make us meet today." As she was deep in her reflections she heard someone chanting scriptures and calling for alms in front of her home, so she thought she would go out and ask him where he had come from, and he replied, "I am a disciple of Abbot Faming of the Jinshan Temple."

"A disciple of Abbot Faming of the Jinshan Temple, are you?" she said. She asked him in and gave him a vegetarian meal while observing closely the way he moved and talked.

He seemed very much like her husband, so she sent the servants away and asked, "Tell me, young teacher, have you been a monk since childhood or did you become one later in life? What is your name? Do you have a mother and father?"

"I did not become a monk when I was a child nor when I was older," he replied. "I must tell you that I bear a hatred as deep as the sea because of a terrible wrong. My father was murdered and my mother carried off by an evil man. The Abbot Faming, my teacher, told me to come and find my mother in the residence of the prefect of Jiangzhou."

"What is your mother's name?" she asked.

"My mother's name is Yin Wenqiao," he replied. "My father was called Chen Guangrui. My milk—name was Jiangliu, and my Buddhist name is Xuanzang."

"I am Yin Wenqiao," she said, then added, "Have you any proof?" When he learned that she was his mother, Xuanzang fell to his knees and wept aloud.

"Mother," he said, "if you don't believe me, then look at this evidence ——the blood letter and the shift." As soon as she saw that they were the real ones, she and her son embraced each other and wept.

Then she said, "Go away at once."

"I can't possibly leave you, mother, on the very day I've seen you after seventeen years of not even knowing who my parents were," he said.

"My child, you must go away as fast as you can," she replied. "The evil Liu will certainly kill you if he comes back. Tomorrow I'll pretend to be ill and say that I once made a vow to donate a hundred pairs of monks'

shoes. I'll come to your temple to fulfil the vow, and I'll talk to you then." Xuanzang obediently bowed to her and left.

Now that she had seen her son Miss Yin was both anxious and happy. One day she said that she was ill, and she lay in her bed refusing food and tea. When Liu Hong came back and asked what was the matter she said,

"When I was young I once vowed that I would donate a hundred pairs of monks' shoes. Five days ago I dreamt that a monk came with a sharp sword in his hand to demand the shoes, and since then I haven't been feeling well."

"That's easily done," said Liu Hong. "Why didn't you mention it before?" He took his place in the official hall and gave instructions to yamen assistants Wang and Li that every household living in the city of Jiangzhou was to make a pair of monk's shoes and hand them in within five days.

When the common people had handed all the shoes in, Miss Yin said to Liu Hong, "Now that the shoes have been made, what temples are there here to which I can take them to fulfil my vow?"

"In Jiangzhou we have the Jinshan Temple and the Jiaoshan Temple; you can go to whichever of them you prefer," replied Liu Hong.

"I've long heard that the Jinshan Temple is a good one, so I'll go there," she said. Liu Hong told the yamen assistants Wang and Li to arrange a boat. Miss Yin went aboard with a trusted servant, the boatman pushed off, and they headed for the Jinshan Temple.

On his return to the temple Xuanzang gave Abbot Faming a full account of what had happened. The abbot was delighted. The next day a maid arrived at the temple to say that her mistress was coining to repay a vow, and all the monks came out to welcome her. When Miss Yin came into the temple she prayed to the Bodhisattva, offered a rich meal to the monks with a donation of money to each of them, and told her maid to put the shoes and the summer socks into the offertory tray. She then went into the Buddha–hall and worshipped with great devotion. When she told him to, Abbot Faming went away to distribute the gifts to the monks. Xuanzang saw that all the other monks had gone and that there was nobody else in the Buddha–hall, so he went up to his mother and knelt down. She told him to take off his shoes and socks and saw that one toe was indeed missing from his left foot. The pair of them hugged each other and cried again, then they bowed to the abbot to thank him for his kindness in bringing the boy up.

"I'm worried that the villain may get to know of your reunion," said the abbot, "so you had better go back as quickly as you can to avoid trouble."

"My son," said Miss Yin, "I shall give you a sandalwood bracelet. You must go to a place called the Ten Thousand Flowers Inn to the Northwest of Hongzhou, which is about five hundred miles from here, where we left Madame Zhang, your paternal grandmother. I shall also write you a letter that you must take to the house of the minister Yin Kaishan which lies to the left of the palace inside the capital city of the Tang Emperor. He is my father. Give him this letter and ask him to submit a memorial to the Tang Emperor asking him to send horse and foot to capture or kill that bandit. Then your father will be avenged and your mother will be rescued. I must stay no longer as I am afraid that evil man may be suspicious if I am late back." She left the temple and went back in her boat.

Xuanzang returned to the temple in tears and told the abbot that he was leaving at once for Hongzhou. When he reached the Ten Thousand Flowers Inn he said to the innkeeper Liu the Second, "How is the mother of Prefect Chen of Jiangzhou who is staying in your inn?"

"She used to stay here," replied the innkeeper. "She went blind, and as she didn't pay any rent for three or four years, she now lives in a ruined tile－kiln near the Southern gate and begs in the streets every day to keep herself alive. That official went away a very long time ago and she hasn't heard from him to this day, though I don't know why." On learning this he asked the way to the ruined tile－kiln at the Southern gate and found his grandmother.

"You sound like my son Chen Guangrui," said his grandmother.

"I'm not Chen Guangrui, I'm his son. My mother is Miss Yin Wenqiao."

"Why have your father and mother not come?" she asked; and he replied, "My father was murdered by a brigand and my mother was forced to become his wife. I have a letter here and a sandalwood bracelet from my mother." His grandmother took the letter and the bracelet, and sobbed aloud. "My son came here for the sake of fame and glory. I thought that he had forgotten all feelings of decency and gratitude; it never occurred to me that he might have been murdered. What a blessing that Heaven in its mercy did not cut short my son's line, so that I now have a grandson to come and find me."

"How did you go blind, granny?" asked Xuanzang.

"I was always thinking of your father and longing for him to come back every day," she said, "but as he never did I wept so much that! lost the sight of both my eyes." Xuanzang fell to his knees and prayed to Heaven.

"Although I am seventeen," he said, "I have been unable to avenge my parents. Today I have come on my mother's orders and found my grandmother; if Heaven is at all moved by my sincerity, may my granny's eyes see again." When he had prayed, he licked her eyes with the tip of his tongue. The licking soon opened them, and they could

see once more.

His grandmother looked at the little monk with a mixture of joy and sadness and said, "You really are my grandson – – you're the very image of my son Guangrui." Xuanzang took her out of the kiln and reinstalled her in Liu the Second's inn, where he rented a room for her, gave her some money to live on, and told her that he would be back within a month.

Taking his leave of his grandmother, he went straight on to the capital, where he found Minister Yin's house in the Eastern Avenue of the imperial city. "I am a relation of the minister's," he said to the gate – keeper, "and I would like to see him."

When the gate – keeper reported this to the minister, he said, "I am no relation of any monk." But his wife said,

"I had a dream last night that our daughter Man – tang – qiao came home; perhaps he has a letter from our son – in – law."

The minister had the young monk brought into the main hall, and when the monk saw the minister and his wife he wept and bowed to the floor before them, then took an envelope out of his bosom and handed it to the minister. The minister opened the letter and read it through, then wailed aloud.

"What's the matter, my lord?" asked his wife, and the minister replied, "This monk is our grandson. Our son – in – law Chen Guangrui was murdered by a brigand, who forced Man – tang – qiao to become his wife." His wife too began to weep bitterly when she heard this news.

"Try not to upset yourself, wife," said the minister. "I shall ask our sovereign at court tomorrow morning to be allowed to lead an army myself. I shall certainly avenge our son – in – law."

The minister went to court the next day and wrote in a memorial to the Tang Emperor: "Your subject's son – in – law, the top graduate Chen Guangrui, was murdered by the boatman Liu Hong while going with his family to take up his office in Jiangzhou, and my daughter was forced to become his wife. This Liu Hong has usurped office for many years by masquerading as my son – in – law. This constitutes treason. I beg Your Majesty to dispatch horse and foot at once to destroy this rebellious brigand."

The Tang Emperor was so angry when he read this that he ordered Minister Yin to set off at the head of sixty thousand men of the

Imperial Guard. The minister left the court with the decree and went to the parade ground to muster the soldiers before setting out for Jiangzhou. By setting out at dawn every day and not stopping till night, they traveled as fast as a shooting star or a flying bird, and before they realized it they had reached Chapter 9

Jiangzhou, where Minister Yin's army camped on the Northern bank. That night he sent a messenger with a gold – inscribed tablet to summon the deputy prefect and district judge of Jiangzhou. Minister Tin explained the situation to them and told them to call out their troops to help him. They crossed the river together, and surrounded Liu Hong's yamen before dawn. Liu Hong, who was still in his dreams, heard the sound of cannon and the beating of drums and gongs; when the soldiers rushed his residence he was helpless and soon captured. The minister ordered that Liu Hong and his gang should be tied up and taken to the execution ground, while the army was to encamp outside the city walls.

The minister went into the main hall of the yamen and asked his daughter to come out and see him. His daughter, who had been longing to go out, felt too ashamed to face her father and so was on the point of hanging herself.

When Xuanzang learned of this he went as fast as he could to save her, fell on his knees, and said, "Your son and my grandfather have come here with an army to avenge my father. That brigand has been arrested, so there is no need at all for you to kill yourself. If you die mother, I won't be able to stay alive." The minister too came into the residence to talk her out of it.

"They say that a woman should only have one husband in her life," she said to them. "I was bitterly grieved at the death of my husband at that brigand's hands, and could not bear the disgrace of marrying his murderer; but as I was carrying my husband's child I had to swallow the shame of staying alive. Now, thank goodness, my son has grown up and my father has brought an army to avenge my husband but how could I have the face to see you. The only way I can make up for it to my husband is to kill myself."

"My child," said the minister, "this was not a case of abandoning morality for the sake of material gain. You acted under duress, and

did nothing to be ashamed of." Father and daughter then embraced each other and wept, while Xuanzang sobbed too. "There is no need for the two of you to be so distressed," said the minister, wiping away his tears. "Today I have captured our enemy, that rebel, and now I must deal with him." He got up and went to the execution ground.

As it happened, the assistant prefect of Jiangzhou had sent constables to arrest the other pirate, Li Biao, and they brought him in. The minister was very pleased, and he ordered that Liu Hong and Li Biao were to be put under a close guard. They were each given a hundred strokes of the heavy pole, and statements were taken from them about how and why they had committed the wicked murder of Chen Guangrui. Then Li Biao was nailed on a wooden donkey and pushed to the market－place, where he was sliced into a thousand pieces, after which his head was hung up on public display. Liu Hong was taken to the Hongjiang Estuary where he had murdered Chen Guangrui. The minister, his daughter and Xuanzang went to the riverside, where they made offerings and libations to the emptiness and cut out Liu Hong's heart and liver while he was still alive to sacrifice to Chen Guangrui. They also burnt a funerary address.

The bitter lamentations of the three of them startled the underwater palace. A patrolling yaksha demon handed the funerary address to the dragon king. When he had read it, the dragon king sent Marshal Turtle to ask Chen Guangrui to come and see him.

"Congratulations, sir, congratulations," said the dragon king. "Your lady, your son and your father－in－law are all sacrificing to you on the bank. I shall now return your soul to you and give you an As－You－Will pearl, two rolling pearls, ten pieces of mermaid silk, and a belt of jade studded with pearls. Today you will be reunited with you wife, your son and your mother." Chen Guangrui bowed to him over and over again to express his gratitude. The dragon king then told a yaksha to take Chen Guangrui's body out to the estuary, where he was to return the soul to it; and the yaksha obediently went off.

Chapter 9

When she had wailed for her husband and sacrificed to him, Miss Tin tried to jump into the water to drown herself, but with a desperate effort Xuanzang managed to keep hold of her. Just at this tense

moment they saw a corpse floating towards the bank. Miss Yin, rushing forward to see who it was, recognized it as that of her husband and started a great wailing. Everyone else had now come up to look, and they saw Chen Guangrui open his fist and stretch his foot as his body gradually began to move. Suddenly he sat up, to their great astonishment. He opened his eyes, and the first thing he saw was his wife, his father－in－law and the young monk all weeping beside him.

"What are you all doing here?" he asked.

"After you were killed I gave birth to this son," replied his wife, "and by a piece of good fortune he was brought up by the abbot of the Jinshan Temple. When he came to find me I sent him to see my father; and when my father knew what had happened he submitted a memorial at court and brought an army here to arrest your murderer, whose heart and liver we have just plucked from his living body to sacrifice to you. But how is it that your soul has been returned to you, husband?"

"It is all because we bought and released that golden carp when we were staying at the Ten Thousand Flowers Inn: the carp, it turned out, was the local dragon king. When that treasonous murderer pushed me into the water I was rescued by the dragon king, who has given me back my soul and presented me with all the treasures I have on me. I never had any idea that you had borne this son, or that my father－in－law had avenged me. Our sorrows are now at an end. This is a very happy moment indeed."

When the other officials heard what had happened they all came to offer their congratulations, and the minister gave a banquet to thank all his subordinates. The army set off on its return journey that same day.

When they reached the Ten Thousand Flowers Inn the minister ordered them to encamp while Guangrui and Xuanzang went to the inn to find the old lady. The night before she had dreamt of a withered tree blossoming again while magpies made a clamorous din behind the building.

"Perhaps my grandson has come," she thought, and while the words were still in her mind she saw Guangrui and his son at the gate of the inn.

"Isn't this my grandmother?" said the little monk; and the moment

Guangrui saw his aged mother he kowtowed to her. Mother and son embraced in tears; then he told her all about what had happened. The innkeeper's account was presented and settled, and then they set off for the capital. When they reached the minister's residence, Guangrui, his wife, his mother and Xuanzang all went in to see the minister's wife, who was overcome with joy and told the servants to lay on a large banquet to celebrate.

"We can call today's banquet a 'reunion banquet,'" said the minister, and the whole household was indeed happy.

When the Tang Emperor entered the throne hall early the next morning, Minister Yin stepped forward and submitted a memorial giving a detailed account of what had happened, and recommending Chen Guangrui as a man whose talents could be put to great use. The Tang Emperor approved the memorial and ordered that Chen Guangrui should be appointed a Scholar in order to take part in administration at court. As Xuanzang had decided to follow the contemplative life he was sent to cultivate his conduct in the Hongfu Temple. Later on Miss Yin finally ended her life in a quiet and honorable way, and Xuanzang went back to the Jinshan Temple to report to Abbot Faming. If you don't know what happened afterwards, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 9

Chapter 10

With a Stupid Plan the Dragon King Breaks the Laws of Heaven

Minister Wei Sends a Letter to an Officer of Hell

We shall not discuss how Chen Guangrui performed his duties or Xuanzang cultivated his conduct; instead we shall talk about two wise men who lived beside the banks of the River Jing outside the city of Chang'an. One was an old fisherman called Zhang Shao and the other was a woodcutter called Li Ding. They were both advanced scholars who had never taken the official examination, lettered men of the mountains. One day, when Li Ding had sold his load of firewood and Zhang Shao had sold his basketful of carp in Chang'an city, they went into a tavern, drank till they were half tipsy, and strolled slowly home along the banks of the Jing, each holding a bottle in his hand.

"Brother Li," said Zhang Shao, "it seems to me that people who struggle for fame kill themselves for it; those who compete for profit die for it; those who accept honors sleep with a tiger in their arms; and those who receive imperial favours walk around with snakes in their sleeves. Taking all in all, we are much better off living free among our clear waters and blue hills: we delight in our poverty and follow our destinies."

"You are right, Brother Zhang," said Li Ding, "but your clear waters have nothing on my blue hills."

"Your blue hills are not a patch on my clear waters," retorted Zhang Shao, "and here is a lyric to the tune of *The Butterfly Loves the Flowers* to prove it:

The skiff is tiny amid the misty expanse of waves;

Calmly I lean against the single sail,

Listening to the voice of Xishi the beauty.

My thoughts and mind are cleared; I have no wealth or fame

As I toy with the waterweed and the rushes.

"To count a few gulls makes the journey happy.

In the reedy bend, under the willow bank,

My wife and children smile with me.

The moment I fall asleep, wind and waves are quiet;

No glory, no disgrace, and not a single worry."

Chapter 10

"Your clear waters are no match for my blue hills," said Li Ding, "and there is another lyric to the same tune to prove it. It goes:

The cloudy woods are covered with pine blossom.

Hush! Hear the oriole sing,

As if it played a pipe with its cunning tongue.

With touches of red and ample green the spring is warm;

Suddenly the summer's here as the seasons turn.

"When autumn comes the look of things is changed;

The scented chrysanthemum

Is enough for my pleasure.

Soon the cruel winter plucks all off.

I am free through four seasons, at nobody's beck and call."

"You don't enjoy the good things in your blue hills that I do on my clear waters," replied the fisherman, "and I can prove it with another lyric to the tune of *The Partridge Heaven:* In this magic land we live off the cloudy waters;

With a sweep of the oar the boat becomes a home.

We cut open the live fish and fry the green turtle

As steam coils from the purple crab and the red shrimps bubble.

Green reed shoots,

Sprouts of water – lilies,

Better still, water chestnuts and the gorgon fruit,

Delicate louts roots and seeds, tender celery,

Arrowhead, reed – hearts and bird – glory blossom."

"Your clear waters cannot compare with my blue hills when it comes to the good things they provide," said the woodcutter, and I can cite another lyric to the tune *The Partridge Heaven* as evidence: Mighty crags and towering peaks reach to the sky;

A grass hut or a thatched cottage is my home.

Pickled chicken and duck are better than turtles or crabs,

Roebuck, boar, venison, and hare beat fish and shrimps.

The leaves of the tree of heaven,

Yellow chinaberry sprouts,

And, even better, bamboo shoots and wild tea,

Purple plums and red peaches, ripe gages, and apricots,

Sweet pears, sharp jujubes, and osmanthus blossom."

"Your blue hills are really nothing on my clear waters," replied the fisherman, "and there is another lyric to the tune *Heavenly Immortal:*

In my little boat I can stay where I like,

Having no fear of the many misty waves.

Drop the hook, cast wide the net, to catch fresh fish:

Even without fat or sauce,

They taste delicious

As the whole family eats its meal together.

"When there are fish to spare I sell them in Chang'an market To buy good liquor and get a little drunk.

Covered with my grass cloak I sleep on the autumn river,

Chapter 10

Snoring soundly

Without a care,

Not giving a damn for honour and glory."

"Your clear waters still aren't as good as my blue mountains," came back the woodcutter, "and I too have a *Heavenly Immortal* lyric to prove it:

Where I build a little thatched hut under the hill

The bamboo, orchid, plum, and pine are wonderful.

As I cross forests and mountains to look for dry firewood

Nobody asks awkward questions,

And I can sell

As much or as little as the world wants.

I spend the money on wine and I'm happy,

Content with my earthenware bowl and china jug.

When I've drunk myself blotto I lie in the shade of the pine.

No worries,

No books to balance;

What do I care about success or failure?"

"Brother Li," said the fisherman, "you don't make as easy a living in the hills as I do on the water, and I can prove it with a lyric to the tune *The Moon on the West River:* The smartweed's flowers are picked out by the moon

While the tangled leaves of rushes sway in the wind.

Clear and distant the azure sky, empty the Chu river:

Stir up the water, and the stars dance.

Chapter 10

Big fish swim into the net in shoals;

Little ones swallow the hooks in swarms;

Boiled or fried they taste wonderful— —

I laugh at the roaring river and lake."

"Brother Zhang," replied the woodcutter, "the living I make in the hills is much easier than yours on the water, and I can prove it with another *Moon on the West River* lyric: Withered and leafless rattan fills the paths,

Old bamboo with broken tips covers the hillside.

Where vines and creepers tangle and climb

I pull some off to tie my bundles.

Elms and willows hollow with decay,

Pines and cedars cracked by the wind— —

I stack them up against the winter cold,

And whether they're sold for wine or money is up to me."

"Although you don't do too badly in your hills, your life is not as elegant as mine on the water," said the fisherman, "as I can show with some lines to the tune *The Immortal by the River*.

As the tide turns my solitary boat departs;

I sing in the night, resting from the oars.

From under a straw cape the waning moon is peaceful.

The sleeping gulls are not disturbed

As the clouds part at the end of the sky.

Tired, I lie on the isle of rushes with nothing to do,

And when the sun is high I'm lying there still.

Chapter 10

I arrange everything to suit myself:

How can the court official compare with my ease

As he waits in the cold for an audience at dawn?"

"Your life on the water may be elegant, but it's nothing compared with mine," replied the woodcutter, "and I have some lines to the same tune to demonstrate the point:

On an autumn day I carry my axe along the greeny path

Bringing the load back in the cool of evening,

Putting wild flowers in my hair, just to be different,

I push aside the clouds to find my way home,

And the moon is up when I tell them to open the door.

Rustic wife and innocent son greet me with smiles,

And I recline on my bed of grass and wooden pillow.

Steamed millet and pear are spread before me,

While the new wine is warm in the pot: This is really civilized."

"All this is about our living and the ways we provide for ourselves," said the fisherman. "I can prove to you that your leisure is nowhere near as good as mine with a poem that goes: Idly I watch the white cranes as they cross the sky;

As I Moor the boat at the river's bank, a blue door gives me shade.

Leaning on the sail I teach my son to twist a fishing line,

When rowing's done I dry the nets out with my wife.

A settled nature can really know the calm of the waves;

A still body feels the lightness of the breeze.

Always to wear a green straw cape and a blue straw hat

Is better than the purple robes of the court."

"Your leisure doesn't come up to mine," replied the woodcutter, "as this poem I shall now recite demonstrates: With a lazy eye on the white clouds in the distance,

I sit alone in a thatched but, then close the bamboo door.

When there's nothing to do I teach my son to read;

Sometimes a visitor comes and we play a game of chess.

When I'm happy I take my stick and walk singing along the paths, Or carry my lute up the emerald hills.

Grass shoes with hempen thongs, a cloak of coarsest cloth,

A mind relaxed: better than wearing silk."

"Li Ding," said the other, "how truly it can be said of us that 'by reciting some verses we become close friends: What need for golden winecups and a sandalwood table?' But there is nothing remarkable in just reciting verses; what would you say if we made couplets in which we each contributed a line about our lives as fisherman and woodcutter?"

"Brother Zhang," said Li Ding, "that is an excellent suggestion. Please be the one to start." Here are their couplets:

My boat is moored in the green waters amid the misty waves;

My home is in the wilds, deep in the mountains.

How well I like the swollen stream under the bridge in spring; My delight is a mountain peak swathed in clouds at dawn.

Dragon – sized fresh carp cooked at any time;

Dry, rotten, firewood always keeps one warm.

A full array of hooks and nets to support my old age;

Carrying wood and making twine will keep me till I die.

Chapter 10

Journey to the West

Lying back in a tiny boat watching the flying geese;

Reclining beside the grassy path and hearing the wild swans call.

I have no stall in the marketplace of tongues;

I've left no trace in the sea of disputation.

The nets hung to dry beside the brook are like brocade;

An axe well honed on rock is sharper than a spear.

Under the shining autumn moon I often fish alone;

I meet nobody on the solitary mountain in spring.

I trade my surplus fish for wine and drink it with my wife;

When I've wood to spare I buy a bottle and share it with my sons.

Singing and musing to myself I'm as wild as I care to be;

Long songs, long sighs, I can let myself be crazy.

I invite my brothers and cousins and fellow boatmen;

Leading my friends by the hand I meet the old man of the wilds.

As we play guess – fingers the cups fly fast;

When we make riddles the goblets slowly circulate.

Saute or boiled crab is a delight every morning;

Plenty of fried duck and chicken cooked in ashes every day.

As my simple wife brews tea, my spirits are untrammelled;

While my mountain spouse cooks supper, my mind is at ease.

At the coming of dawn I wash my stick in the ripples;

When the sun rises I carry firewood across the road.

After the rain I put on my cloak to catch live carp;

I wield my axe before the wind to fell a withered pine.

I cover my tracks and hide from the world, acting the imbecile; I change my name and pretend to be deaf and dumb.

Chapter 10

133

Journey to the West

"Brother Li," said Zhang Shao. "I unfairly took the first lines just now, so now it's your turn to compose the first lines while I follow you." Thus they continued:

The man of the mountains acting mad under wind and moon;

The haughty and unwanted dotard of the river.

With his share of idleness, and able to be quite free;

No sound from his voice as he revels in his peace.

On moonlit nights he sleeps secure in a cottage of thatch;

He lightly covers himself at dusk with clothes of reed.

His passion spent, he befriends the pine and the plum;

He is happy to be the companion of cormorant and gull.

Fame and profit count for nothing in his mind;

His ears have never heard the clash of arms.

One is always pouring out fresh rice－wine,

The other has wild vegetable soup with every meal.

One makes a living with two bundles of firewood;

The other supports himself with rod and line.

One idly tells his innocent son to sharpen the axe of steel;

The other quietly bids his slow－witted child to mend the nets.

In spring one likes to see the willows turning green;

When the seasons change the other enjoys the rushes' blue.

Avoiding the summer heat, one trims the new bamboo;

The other gathers water – chestnuts on cool July evenings.

When frost begins, plump chickens are killed each day;

In mid – autumn the crabs are at their best and always in the pot.

Chapter 10

134

Journey to the West

When the sun rises in winter, the one is still asleep;

The other keeps cool in the dog days of summer.

Throughout the year one does as he pleases in the hills;

In all four seasons the other is happy on the lake.

By gathering firewood you can become an Immortal;

There is nothing worldly about fishing.

Sweet smell the wild flowers growing outside my door;

Smooth are the green waves lapping at my boat.

A contented man never speaks of high honors;

A settled nature is stronger than a city wall.

Higher than a city wall for resisting enemy armies;

More illustrious than holding high office and listening to imperial decrees.

Those who are happy with mountains and rivers are few indeed;

Thank Heaven, thank Earth, and thank the spirits.

When the two of them had recited their verses and matched couplets they came to the place where their ways parted and bowed to each other to take their leave. "Brother Li," said Zhang Shao, "look after

yourself on your way home and keep a sharp look – out for tigers up in the hills. If you met with an accident then 'an old friend would be missing on the road tomorrow.'" This made Li Ding angry.

"You scoundrel," he said, "I'm your friend; I'd die for you. How could you put such a curse on me? If I'm killed by a tiger, you'll be capsized by a wave."

"I'll never be capsized!" retorted Zhang Shao.

"'In nature there are unexpected storms and in life unpredictable vicissitudes,'" quoted Li Ding, "so how can you be sure you'll never have an accident?"

"Brother Zhang," replied the fisherman, "despite what you just said, it's your life that's insecure, whereas my life is certain: I'm sure that I shan't have an accident."

"Your life on the water is very dangerous and insecure," said the woodcutter, "so how can you be so certain?"

"There's something you don't know," said Zhang Shao. "Every day I give a golden carp to a fortune – teller on the West Gate Street in Chang'an, and he passes a slip into my sleeve telling me I'll catch something every time provided I go to the right place. I went to buy a forecast from him today, and he told me that if I cast my Chapter 10

nets to the East of the bend in the Jing River and lowered my lines on the Western bank, I would be bound to get a full load of fish and shrimps to take home. Tomorrow I shall go into town to sell them to buy wine, and we can continue our talk then, brother." With this they parted.

How true it is that if you talk on the road there will be someone listening in the grass. A patrolling yaksha from the Jing River Palace overheard Zhang Shao's remark about always catching fish and rushed straight back to the palace of crystal to make an urgent report of disaster to the dragon king.

"What disaster?" asked the dragon king, and the yaksha replied, "Your subject was patrolling in the water by the river's edge when I heard a fisherman and a woodcutter talking. Just when they were parting they

sounded very dangerous. The fisherman said that there is a soothsayer on West Gate Street in Chang'an city whose predictions are very accurate. The fisherman gives him a golden carp every day, and he hands the fisherman a slip saying that he'll catch fish at every attempt. If his calculations are so accurate, won't all we water folk be wiped out? Shall we fortify the water palace, or shall we make some leaping waves to strengthen Your Majesty's prestige?"

The dragon king seized his sword in a great rage, intending to go straight to Chang'an city and destroy this fortune－teller, but then his dragon sons and grandsons, shrimp officials, crab soldiers, shad generals, mandarin－fish ministers, and carp premier submitted a joint memorial that read: "We beg Your Majesty not to act in anger. As the saying goes, 'words overheard are not to be trusted.' If Your Majesty were to go now you would have to be accompanied by clouds and helped by rain; and if this frightens the common people of Chang'an, Heaven may take offence. Your Majesty is capable of making all sorts of transformations, and of appearing and vanishing unexpectedly; so you should change into a scholar for this visit to Chang'an. If you find that it is true, you will be able to punish him at your leisure; and if it turns out to be false, you will avoid killing an innocent man." Taking their advice, the dragon king put aside his sword, and without raising clouds or rain he climbed out on the back, shook himself, and turned into a scholar dressed in white. He was Handsome and noble,

Towering into the clouds.

His step was stately

And he observed the rules of conduct.

In his speech he showed his respect for Confucius and Mencius, His manners were those of the Duke of Zhou and King Wen.

He wore a gown of jade－green silk,

A cloth wrapped casually round his head.

Once on the road he strode straight to West Gate Street in Chang'an city, where he saw a crowd of people pushing and shouting. One of them was proclaiming grandiloquently, "He who was born under the Dragon will clash with the one who belongs to the Tiger. Although the cyclical characters are supposed to be in concordance, I'm afraid that the Year Planet may be offended by the Sun." As soon as he heard this the dragon

king knew that this was the place where fortunes were told, so he pushed through the crowds to look inside.

He saw:

Four walls covered with pearls,

A room full of silken embroideries,

Incense ever rising from a burner,

Clear water in a porcelain pot.

On either side were paintings by Wang Wei;

High above the seat hung a picture of the Devil Valley Hermit.

An inkstone from Duanxi County,

"Golden smoke" ink,

On which leant a large brush of finest hairs;

A forest of fiery pearls,

The prediction of Guo Pu,

As he diligently compared them to the Tai Zheng Xin Jing.

He was deeply versed in the six lines of the diagrams,

A great expert on the Eight Trigrams.

He understood the principles of Heaven and Earth,

And saw into the feelings of gods and devils.

He knew all about the cyclical numbers,

And had a clear picture of the constellations.

He saw the events of the future,

The events of the past,

As if in a mirror.

Which house would rise,

Which house would fall,

Chapter 10

137

Journey to the West

He could tell with divine perception.

He knew when good and bad was coming,

Could predict death and survival.

His words hastened wind and rain;

When he wielded his writing – brush, gods and devils trembled.

His name was written on a signboard:

Master of Divination Yuan Shoucheng.

Who was he? He was Yuan Shoucheng, the uncle of Yuan Tiangang the Imperial Astrologer. He was famous throughout the country, and the leading member of his profession in Chang'an. The dragon king went in to see him, and when they had greeted each other he asked the dragon king to sit down, while a servant brought tea.

"What have you come to ask about, sir?" asked the soothsayer, and the dragon king replied, "I beg you to uncover the secrets of the sky for me." The soothsayer passed him a slip of paper from his sleeve and said,

"Clouds obscure the mountain peak, mist covers the tree tops. If there is to be rain, it will certainly come tomorrow."

"When will it rain tomorrow," asked the dragon king, "and how many inches of rain will fall?"

"Tomorrow the clouds will gather at mid – morning; late in the morning there will be thunder; at noon it will start to rain; and in the early afternoon the rain will finish, after 3 feet 3.48 inches have fallen," replied the soothsayer.

"I trust that you are not fooling," said the dragon king. "If it rains tomorrow at the time and to the depth you have predicted I shall pay you a fee of fifty pieces of gold. If it does not rain, or if it does not rain at the time and to the depth you say it will, then I'm telling you straight that I'll smash up your shopfront, tear down your sign and run you out of Chang'an so that you won't be able to deceive the people a moment longer."

"That is entirely up to you," replied the other cheerfully. "We shall meet again tomorrow after the rain."

The dragon king took his leave and went back to his watery palace from Chang'an. The greater and lesser water spirits greeted him with the question, "How did Your Majesty's visit to the soothsayer go?"

"It was all right," he replied, "but he was a smooth－tongued fortune－teller. When I asked him when it would rain, he said tomorrow. When I asked what time of day it would be and how much would fall, he said that at mid－morning the clouds would gather, late in the morning it would thunder, at noon it would start to rain, and early in the afternoon it would stop raining. He also said that 3 feet 3.48 inches of rain would fall. I made a wager with him that if his prediction turned out to be true, I'd give him fifty ounces of gold; but if he got it at all wrong, I'd smash up his shopfront id drive him out, so that he wouldn't be able to deceive the public any longer. The watery tribe laughed and said, "Your Majesty is the General Superintendent of the Eight Rivers and the Great Dragon God of the Rain, so only you can know whether there will be rain. How dare he talk such nonsense? That fortune－teller is bound to lose, absolutely bound to."

Just as all the dragon sons and grandsons were laughing and talking about this with the fish ministers and crab soldiers a shout was heard from the sky: "Dragon King of the Jing River, prepare to receive an Imperial Decree." They all looked up and saw a warrior in golden clothes coming towards the watery palace with a decree from the Jade Emperor in his hands. This alarmed the dragon king, who straightened his clothes, stood up solemnly, burnt incense and received the decree. The gold－clad warrior returned to the sky. Giving thanks for the

imperial grace the dragon king opened the letter and read:

"We order the Superintendent of the Eight Rivers to travel with thunder and lightning and succor the city of Chang'an with rain."

The time and the amount on the decree were exactly the same as those foretold by the soothsayer, which so startled the dragon king that he passed out. When he came round a moment later he said to the watery tribe,

"How can there be a man of such powers in the mortal world? He is really someone who knows everything about Heaven and Earth— —I'm bound to be beaten by him."

"Your Majesty should not worry," submitted General Shad in a memorial. "There will be no difficulty about beating him. Your subject has a humble plan that I can guarantee will shut that scoundrel's mouth." When the dragon king asked what the plan was, the general replied, "Make it rain at the wrong time and not quite enough, so that his predictions are wrong, and then you will surely beat him. There will be nothing to stop you smashing his sign to smithereens and running him out of town." The dragon king accepted his advice and stopped worrying.

The next day he ordered Viscount Wind, Duke Thunder, the Cloud Youth and Mother Lightning to go to the sky above the city of Chang'an. He waited till late in the morning before spreading the clouds, unleashed the thunder at noon, started the rain in the early afternoon, and stopped it in the late afternoon, when only three feet and 0.4 inches had fallen. He had thus changed the times by two hours and reduced the amount of rain by

.08 inches. After the rain he dismissed his generals and his hosts and put away his clouds; then he changed back into a white—clad scholar and charged into Yuan Shoucheng's fortune—telling stall on West Gate Street.

Without even asking for an explanation he smashed up Yuan's sign, his brush, his inkstone, and everything else, while the fortune—teller remained calmly in his chair without moving.

The dragon king brandished the door in the air, ready to hit him with it, and began to pour abuse on him: "You evil man, with all your reckless talk about blessings and disasters; you stinking deceiver of the masses. Your predictions are false, and you talk nonsense. You got the time and the amount of today's rain quite wrong, but you still sit there

so high and mighty. Get out at once if you want me to spare your life." Yuan Shoucheng, who was as calm and unfrightened as ever, looked up to the sky with a mocking smile.

"I'm not afraid," he said, "I'm not afraid. I've committed no capital offence, but I fear that you have. You may be able to fool other people, but you can't fool me. I know who you are. You're no scholar; you're the Dragon King of the River Jing. You flouted a decree of the Jade Emperor by changing the time of the rain and cutting down the amount, which is a crime against the laws of Heaven. I'm afraid that you're for the executioner's blade on the Dragon—slicing Scaffold. Are you going to keep up that abuse of me?"

On hearing this the dragon king trembled from fear and his hair stood on end. Dropping the door at once he straightened his clothes and made gestures of submission, kneeling to the soothsayer and saying, "Please do not be angry with me, sir; I was only joking. I never thought that it would be taken seriously. Whatever am I to do if I have broken the laws of Heaven? I beg you to save me, sir. If you don't I shall haunt you after my Chapter 10

death."

"I can't save you," replied Yuan Shoucheng, "but I can suggest one way by which you may be able to save your skin."

"I beg you to tell me," implored the dragon king.

"Tomorrow afternoon at half past one you will have to go to the office of the official in charge of personnel, Wei Zheng, to be beheaded. If you want to stay alive you must report at once to the present Tang Emperor, Taizong, as Wei Zheng is a minister of his; and if you can get him to speak for you, you will be all right." The dragon king took his leave of the soothsayer with tears in his eyes and went away. The sun was setting in the West, and the moon and stars were coming out.

As clouds settle round the mountains the crows fly back to roost, The travelers on long journeys find inns for the night.

The returning geese sleep on a sandbank by the ford,

As the Milky Way appears.

While the hours push on

A lamp in the lonely village burns with barely a flame.

Pure is the monastery as the reed smoke curls in the breeze;

Men disappear in the butterfly dream.

As the moon sinks, flower shadows climb the rails,

The stars are a jumble of light.

The hours are called,

The night is already half way through.

The Dragon King of the River Jing did not return to his watery palace but stayed in the sky until the small hours of the morning, when he put away his cloud and his mist horn, and went straight to the gate of the Imperial Palace. At this very moment the Tang Emperor dreamt that he went out of the palace gate to stroll among the flowers in the moonlight. The dragon king at once took human form, went up to him and knelt and bowed before him, crying, "Save me, Your Majesty, save me."

"Who are you, that we should save you?" asked Taizong.

"Your Majesty is a true dragon," replied the dragon king, "and I am a wicked dragon. As I have offended against the laws of Heaven, I am due to be beheaded by Your Majesty's illustrious minister Wei Zheng, the official in charge of personnel, so I have come to beg you to save me."

"If you are supposed to be beheaded by Wei Zheng, we can save you, so set your mind at rest and go along now," said the Tang Emperor. The dragon king, who was extremely happy, kowtowed in thanks and went away.

Taizong remembered his dream when he woke up. It was now half past four in the morning, so Taizong held court before the assembled civil and military officials.

Mist wreathed the palace gates,

Incense rose to the dragon towers.

In the shimmering light the silken screen moves,

As the clouds shake the imperial glory spreads.

Monarch and subject as faithful as Yao and Shun,

Imposing music and ritual rivaling Zhou and Han.

Pages hold lanterns,

Palace women hold fans,

In brilliant pairs.

Pheasant screens,

Unicorn halls,

Shimmering everywhere.

As the call "Long Live the Emperor" goes up,

The Empress is wished a thousand autumns.

When the Rod of Silence descends three times,

The uniformed officials bow to the emperor.

The brightly coloured palace flowers have a heavenly scent;

The delicate willows on the bank sing royal songs.

Pearl curtains,

Jade curtains,

Are hung high from golden hooks;

Dragon and phoenix fans,

Landscape fans,

Rest by the royal chariot.

Elegant are the civil officials,

Vigorous the generals.

By the Imperial Way high and low are divided;

They stand by rank beneath the palace steps.

The ministers with their purple corded seals ride three elephants.

May the Emperor live as long as Heaven and Earth!

When the officials had all done homage they divided into their groups. The Tang Emperor looked at them one by one with his dragon and phoenix eyes. Among the civil officials he observed Fang Xuanling, Du Ruhui, Xu Shiji, Xu Jingzong, Wang Gui and others; and among the military officers he saw Ma Sanbao, Duan Zhixian, Yin Kaishan, Cheng Yaojin, Liu Hongji, Hu Jingde, and Qin Shubao among others. Every one of them was standing there solemnly and with dignity, but he could not see Minister Wei Zheng among them.

He summoned Xu Shiji into the palace hall and said to him, "We had a strange dream last night in which a man came and bowed to us, claiming that he was the Dragon King of the River Jing. He had broken the laws of Heaven, and was due to be beheaded by the official in the personnel department, Wei Zheng. He begged us to save him, and we agreed. Why is it that the only official missing at court today is Wei Zheng?"

"If this dream is true," replied Xu Shiji, "Wei Zheng must be summoned to the palace, and Your Majesty must not let him out of doors. Once today is over the Dragon King will be saved." The Tang Emperor was overjoyed and he sent a personal aide with a decree summoning Wei Zheng to court.

That night the minister Wei Zheng had been reading the stars in his residence and was just burning some precious incense when he heard a crane calling in the sky. It was a messenger from Heaven with a decree from the Jade Emperor ordering him to behead the Dragon King of the River Jing in a dream at half past one the following

afternoon. The minister thanked Heaven for its grace, fasted and bathed himself, tried out the sword of his wisdom, and exercised his soul. This was why he did not go to court. When the imperial aide came with a summons he was frightened and nonplussed; but he did not dare to delay in obeying an order from his monarch, so he hurriedly tidied his clothes, tightened his belt, and went to the palace with the summons in his hands. He kowtowed to the Emperor and admitted his fault.

"We forgive you," said the Emperor. The officials had not yet withdrawn, so the Emperor now ordered the curtains to be lowered and dismissed them. The only one of them he kept behind was Wei Zheng, whom he ordered to mount the golden chariot and come to his private quarters with him, where they discussed the policies to bring peace and stability to the country.

At about noon he ordered the palace ladies to bring a large *weiqi* chess set and said, "We shall now have a game of chess." The Imperial concubines brought in a chess board and set it on the Emperor's table. Thanking Chapter 10

the Tang Emperor for his grace, Wei Zheng started to play with him. As each moved in turn they built up their lines of battle. It was just as the *Chess Classic* says: The Way of chess:

The best place is the middle of the board,

The worst is the side,

And the comers are neither good nor bad.

This is the eternal law of chess.

The law says:

"It is better to lose a piece

Than to lose the initiative.

When you are struck on the left, look to the right,

When attacked in the rear, keep an eye on your front.

Sometimes the leader is really behind,

Sometimes the laggard is really ahead.

If you have two 'live' areas do not let them be severed;

If you can survive as you are, do not link up.

Do not spread yourself out too thinly,

Do not crowd your pieces too closely.

Rather than being niggardly with your pieces,

Lose them and win the game.

Rather than moving for no reason,

It is better to strengthen your position.

When he has many and you have few,

Concentrate on survival;

When you have many and he has few,

Chapter 10

143

Journey to the West

Extend your positions.

The one who is good at winning does not have to struggle;

The one who draws up a good position does not have to fight;

The one who fights well does not lose;

The one who loses well is not thrown into confusion.

Open your game with conventional gambits,

And end by winning with surprise attacks.

When the enemy strengthens himself for no apparent reason,

He is planning to attack and cut you off.

When he abandons small areas and does not rescue them

His ambitions are great.

The man who places his pieces at random

Has no plans;

The man who responds without thinking

Is heading for defeat.

The Book of Songs says:

"Be cautious and careful

As if you were walking on the edge of a precipice.'

This is what it means."

There is a poem that goes:

The board is the Earth, the chessmen Heaven,

The colours, Positive and Negative,

When you reach that subtle state when all the changes become clear,
You can laugh and brag about the chess – playing Immortals.

Chapter 10

As sovereign and minister played their game of chess it was half past one. Although the game was not over, Wei Zheng slumped down beside the table and started to snore, fast asleep.

"Worthy Minister," said Taizong with a smile, "you have exhausted your mind in strengthening the country and tired yourself out building the empire; that is why you have fallen asleep without realizing it." The Emperor said no more and let him sleep. Not long afterwards Wei Zheng woke up, prostrated himself on the floor, and said, "Your subject deserves ten thousand deaths. I fell asleep without knowing

what I was doing, and I beg Your Majesty to forgive your subject's criminal discourtesy to his sovereign."

"What criminal discourtesy have you committed?" the Emperor asked. "Rise, and take the Pieces off the board so that we may start again." Wei Zheng thanked him for his grace, and was just taking the pieces in his hand when he heard shouting outside the palace gates. Qin Shubao, Xu Maogong and some others brought in a dragon's head dripping with blood, threw it to the floor in front of the Emperor, and reported, "Your Majesty, Seas have gone shallow and rivers have run dry,

But such a sight as this was never seen by human eye."

The Emperor and Wei Zheng rose to their feet and asked where it had come from.

"This dragon's head fell from a cloud at the crossroads at the end of the Thousand Yard Portico, and your humble subjects dared not fail to report it," said Qin Shubao and Xu Maogong.

"What does this mean?" the Tang Emperor asked Wei Zheng in astonishment.

"Your subject beheaded it in a dream just now," replied Wei Zheng, kowtowing.

"But I never saw you move your hand or body when you were dozing," said the shocked Emperor, "and you had no sword, so how could you have beheaded it?"

"My lord," replied Wei Zheng, "your subject

Was bodily in your presence,

But far away in my dream.

I was bodily in your presence reaching the end of a game.

When I shut my eyes and felt drowsy;

I went far away in my dream, riding a magic cloud,

Bursting with energy.

Chapter 10

That dragon

Was on the Dragon—slicing Scaffold

Where he had been tied by the officers and soldiers of Heaven.

Then your minister said,

'You have broken the laws of Heaven,

And deserve the death penalty.

I bear a heavenly mandate

To behead you.'

When the dragon heard he was bitterly grieved;

Your subject marshalled his spirits.

When the dragon heard he was bitterly grieved,

Pulled in his claws, laid down his scales and gladly prepared to die.

Your subject marshalled his spirits,

Hitched up his clothes, stepped forward and raised the blade.

With a snick the sword came down,

And the dragon's head fell into the void."

Emperor Taizong's feelings on hearing this were mixed. On the one hand he was happy, because he was proud of having so good a minister as Wei Zheng; for with a hero like that in his court he needed to have no worries about the safety of the empire. On the other hand he was distressed, because although he had promised in his dream to save the dragon, it had been executed. He had no choice but to pull himself together and order Qin Shubao to hang the dragon's head up in the market place as a warning to the common people of Chang'an. He also rewarded Wei Zheng, and then all the officials dispersed.

When he returned to the palace that evening, the Emperor was

depressed as he remembered how the dragon had wept so bitterly in his dream, begging to be saved. Yet the dragon had been unable to avoid its doom.

After brooding over this for a long time he felt more and more exhausted and uneasy. In the second watch of the night he heard sobbing outside the palace gates, which made him more frightened than ever. As he lay in a fitful sleep, the dragon king of the River Jing reappeared, this time holding a head dripping with blood in his hands.

"Emperor Taizong of the Tang," he shouted, "give me back my life, give me back my life. Last night you were full of promises to save me, so why did you double – cross me yesterday and order Wei Zheng, the official in charge of personnel, to behead me? Come out, come out, and we shall go to the King of Hell's place to have Chapter 10

this out." He pulled at the Emperor's clothes and would not stop shouting. Taizong could find nothing to say, and struggled so hard to get away that he was pouring with sweat. Just at this most awkward moment he saw fragrant clouds and coloured mists to the South. A female Immortal came forward and waved a willow twig, at which the headless dragon went off to the Northwest, weeping pitifully. This Immortal was the Bodhisattva Guanyin, who had come to the East in obedience to the Buddha's decree to find the man to fetch the scriptures. She was now staying in the temple of the tutelary god of Chang'an, and when she heard the devilish howling she came to chase away the wicked dragon. The dragon then went down to Hell to submit a full report.

When Taizong woke up he shouted, "A ghost, a ghost!" The empresses of the three palaces, the imperial consorts and concubines of the six compounds, the attendants and the eunuchs were all so terrified by this that they lay awake trembling for the rest of the night. Before long it was half past four, and all the military and civil officials were waiting for the morning court outside the palace gates. When dawn came and the Emperor had still not come to court they were so frightened that they did not know what to do.

It was not till the sun was high in the sky that a decree was brought out that read, "As our mind is not at ease all the officials are excused court." Six or seven days quickly passed, and all the officials were so

anxious that they wished they could rush to the palace gates to see the Emperor and ask after his health, but all that happened was that the Empress issued a decree summoning the royal doctors to the palace to administer medicine. Crowds of officials gathered at the palace gates waiting for news, and when the doctors came out a little later they asked what the matter was.

"His Majesty's pulse in not as it should be: it is both faint and fast. He murmurs deliriously about having seen a ghost. His pulse stops every ten beats. His five viscera lack all spirit, and I am afraid that the worst must be expected within seven days." The officials went pale from shock.

Amid all the panic it was learned that Taizong had sent for Xu Maogong, the Duke Protector Qin Shubao, and Lord Yuchi Jingde. When the three lords received the decree they hurried to the lower story of the side palace.

When they had bowed to him, a serious–faced Taizong spoke forcefully to them.

"Illustrious ministers," he said, "we started to command troops at the age of nineteen, and had many hard years of fighting from then on, conquering the North and the South, defending in the East, and wiping out our enemies in the West; but never once did we see anything sinister or evil. Yet now we are seeing ghosts."

"Your Majesty has founded an empire and slaughtered men beyond number, so why should you be scared of ghosts?" asked Lord Yuchi.

"You don't believe us," the Emperor replied, "but outside our bedroom door at night bricks and tiles fly about and the ghosts and demons howl. It is really terrible. Daytime is passable, but the nights are unbearable."

"Don't worry, Your Majesty," said Qin Shubao. "Tonight I and Yuchi Jingde shall guard the palace doors to see whether there are any ghosts or not." Taizong agreed to his suggestion, and after thanking him for his kindness Xu Maogong and the other two generals withdrew. That evening the two of them put on their equipment and took up their positions outside the palace gates in full armour and helmet, with golden maces and battle–axes in their hands. Look how these splendid generals were dressed: On their heads were golden helmets bright,

On their bodies was armour like dragon scales.

Magic clouds glisten in front of their Heart – protecting Mirrors; Their lion coats are tightly buckled.

Fresh are the colours of their embroidered belts.

One looks up to the sky with his phoenix eyes, and the stars tremble; The other's eyes flash lightning and dim the moonlight.

These true heroes and distinguished ministers

Will be called gate – protectors for a thousand years

And serve as door – gods for ten thousand ages.

The two generals stood beside the doors till deep into the night, and not a single demon did they see. That night Taizong slept peacefully in the palace and nothing happened. When morning came he called the two generals in and gave them rich rewards.

"We had not been able to sleep for several days since we fell ill," he said, "but last night was very peaceful, thanks to the awesome might of you two generals. Please go and rest now so that you can guard us again tonight." The two generals thanked him and left. For the next two or three nights they stood guard and all was quiet; but the Emperor ate less and less as his illness took a turn for the worse. Not wishing to put the two generals to any more trouble, he summoned them to the palace with Du Ruhui and Fang Xuanling.

These were the instructions he gave them: "Although we have enjoyed peace for the last two days, we are unhappy about the night – long ordeals we have imposed on Generals Qin and Yuchi. We therefore wish to commission two skilled painters to make faithful portraits of the two generals to paste on the doors so that they may be saved trouble. What do you think?" In obedience to the imperial decree the officials chose two men who could draw a good likeness, and the two generals wore their armour as before while they were painted. Then the pictures were stuck on the doors, and there was no trouble that night.

The next two or three days were peaceful too but then the Emperor

heard bricks and tiles banging and crashing once again at the Hou Zai Gate. He summoned his officials at dawn and said, "There has, thank goodness, been no trouble at the front gates for several days now, but there were noises at the back gates last night that practically scared me to death." Xu Maogong went forward and submitted this suggestion: "When there was trouble at the front gates Yuchi Jingde and Qin Shubao protected Your Majesty. Now there is trouble at the back gates Wei Zheng should be ordered to stand guard."

Taizong approved his suggestion, and ordered Wei Zheng to stand guard at the back gates that night. Wei Zheng received the edict, and that night he put on his best clothes, belted himself tightly, and took up his vigil outside the Hou Zai Gate. He was a true hero. He wore

A black band of silk around his forehead,

A brocade gown loosely belted with jade.

His hood and billowing sleeves caught the frost and dew,

And he looked more ferocious than the ghost – quellers Shenshu and Yul ti.

On his feet he wore black boots for motionless movement;

In his hand he wielded a keen – edged blade with great ferocity.

He looked around with glaring eyes:

What evil spirit would have dared approach?

No devils were seen all night, but although nothing happened at the front or back gates the Emperor's condition still deteriorated. One day the Empress Dowager issued an edict summoning the officials to discuss funeral arrangements. Taizong sent for Xu Maogong and gave him orders about affairs of state, instructing him to look after the heir to the throne in the way that Liu Bei, the ruler of Shu, had instructed Zhuge Liang.

When he had finished speaking he was bathed and put into clean clothes. All he had to do now was to wait for the end. Then in rushed

Wei Zheng, who grabbed hold of his dragon robes and said, "Do not worry, Your Majesty. I can ensure Your Majesty long life."

"The disease has reached my heart," replied the Emperor, "and my life will end at any moment now, so how can you save it?"

"Your subject has a letter here," said Wei Zheng, "that I am offering to Your Majesty to take with you to the underworld and give to Cui Jue, the judge of Fengdu."

"Who is this Cui Jue?" asked the Emperor.

"He was one of the officers of Your Majesty's exalted predecessor. From being magistrate of Cizhou he was promoted to be vice－president of the Ministry of Rites. When he was alive he and I were close friends. Now that he is dead he is in charge of the Registers of Birth and Death in the underworld as judge of Fengdu, and he often comes to see me in my dreams. If you take this letter with you on your journey and give it to him, he is bound to allow Your Majesty to come back out of consideration for your humble subject. I can guarantee that Your Majesty's soul will return to the sunlight, and the dragon countenance will certainly return to the imperial capital." Taizong took the letter and put it in his sleeve, then he shut his eyes in death. The empresses, consorts and imperial concubines of the three palaces and the six compounds, the palace servants, the heir to the throne, and the civil and military officials all grieved and dressed in mourning. The imperial coffin lay in state in the White Tiger Hall.

If you don't know how Taizong came back to life, listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

Chapter 11

After Touring the Underworld, Taizong Returns to Life.

By Presenting a Pumpkin Liu Quan Continues His Marriage

Chapter 11

149

Journey to the West

A hundred years flow by like water;

A lifetime's career is no more than a bubble,

The face that yesterday was the color of peach – blossom

Today is edged with snow.

When the white ants' line of battle collapses, all is illusion;

"Repent, repent," is the cuckoo's urgent call.

He who does good in secret can always prolong his life;

Heaven looks after the one who asks no pity.

Taizong was in a daze as his soul went straight to the Tower of Five Phoenixes, in front of which he saw the horsemen of the Imperial Guard who invited him out hunting with them. Taizong was glad to go and they went off into the distance; but after they had been going for some time he found himself walking alone in a wasteland: the horsemen had all disappeared. Just as he was discovering to his alarm that he could not find his way a man appeared not far away, shouting.

"Great Tang Emperor, come here, come here." On hearing this Taizong looked up and saw him: A black silk turban,

A rhinoceros – horn belt.

The black silk turban has tabs blowing in the breeze;

The rhinoceros – horn belt has golden mountings.

In his hands an ivory tablet, glowing auspiciously;

His thin silk gown conceals his divine light.

He wears a pair of boots with whitened soles

As he climbs the clouds and grasps the mist,

Holding to his chest the Registers of Life and Death,

Noting down the quick and the dead.

His tangled hair blows about his ears;

His whiskers dance and fly beside his cheeks.

Chapter 11

Once he used to be a Tang minister

But now he judges cases for the King of Hell.

When Taizong went up to him, he fell on his knees beside the path and said, "Your Majesty, please forgive your subject for his crime of failing to come far enough to meet you."

"Who are you?" asked the Emperor, "and why have you come to meet me?"

"A fortnight ago your humble servant heard the Dragon King of the River Jing bringing a case against Your Majesty in the Senluo Palace because he was executed despite your promise to save him," replied the other.

"The King of Qinguang of the First Palace sent devil messengers with an urgent summons to Your Majesty to be present when the case is heard between the Three Orders: the Human Order, the Underworld Order and the Water Order. When I heard this I came here to meet Your Majesty. I arrived late, so I beg for forgiveness."

"What is your name and position?" asked Taizong.

"When your humble servant was alive I used to serve His Late Majesty. I was magistrate of Cizhou, and later made vice－president of the Ministry of Rites. My name is Cui Jue. I have now been given office in the underworld as the judge in charge of cases at Fengdu." Taizong, greatly delighted to learn this, went up to him and supported him with his imperial hands as he said, "Sir, you have made a long and exhausting journey.

Wei Zheng, our minister, gave us a letter for you; how lucky that we have met." The judge thanked him and asked where the letter was. Taizong produced it from his sleeve and handed it over to Cui Jue, who received it with a bow. When he opened it he saw that it read as follows:

Your Excellency, Metropolitan Judge, and Venerable Elder Brother Cui, Remembering our former friendship; I still see and hear you as if you were alive; but many years have now flown by since I last received your pure instruction. On feast days I set out some vegetarian dishes as a sacrifice to you, but I have been unable to divine whether they are enjoyed by you. As I have the good fortune not to have been

abandoned by you and you have appeared to me in dreams, I now know that my great elder brother has risen high. But, alas, there is a great gap between the worlds of darkness and of light, and we are unable to meet each other as we are each at different ends of the universe.

As the Cultured Emperor Taizong has recently passed away of a sudden illness it seems likely that his case will be discussed by the Three Orders, so that he is bound to meet you, elder brother. I beseech you to remember the friendship of the days when you were alive and give His Majesty such assistance as will enable him to return to the sunlight. This would be a great favour, and I shall write again to thank you. I cannot go into all the details of the case here.

Your younger brother kowtows to you.

With affection,

Wei Zheng.

Chapter 11

The judge was very pleased when he had read the letter. "I know about how the official Wei of the personnel department beheaded the dragon in a dream the other day," he said, "and this news filled me with great admiration. He has always looked after my sons and grandsons, and now that I have a letter from him, Your Majesty need have no worries. Your humble servant can undertake to escort Your Majesty back to the light, where you will once more ascend the throne." Taizong thanked him.

As they were talking a pair of servant boys in black appeared, carrying banners and a precious canopy. "An invitation from King Yama," they shouted. Taizong and Judge Cui went along with them. A city wall appeared in front of them, and above its gates hung a large tablet on which was written DEVIL GATE OF

THE WORLD OF DARKNESS in huge letters of gold. The two lictors waved their banners and led Taizong into the city and along its streets. Beside the road he saw his father and predecessor Li Yuan, as well as his dead brothers Jaincheng and Yuanji, who went up to him and said, "Shimin's here, Shimin's here," using his personal name. They

grabbed and hit him, demanding their lives back; and as Taizong could not avoid them they held him fast until Judge Cui ordered a blue – faced devil with terrible fangs to drive them away. Only then was Taizong able to escape from their clutches. After another mile or so he saw a green – tiled tower rising majestically before him.

A myriad coloured veils of haze drifting about it,

A thousand wisps of red mist dimly appearing.

The flying eaves had monsters at their ends,

The matching tiles of the five roofs were gleaming bright.

Rows of golden studs were driven into the doors,

A length of whitest jade was placed across each threshold.

When the windows faced the light they glowed like the dawn;

Red lightning flashed from the lattice and the blinds.

The tower soared into the azure sky

While porticos led to sumptuous courtyards.

Incense from braziers shaped like beasts perfumed the royal robes;
The light from lanterns of purple gauze was thrown on palace fans.

To the left a row of ferocious bull – headed demons;

To the right were terrible horse – faced devils.

Those who escorted the spirits of the dead had golden tablets; Chapter 11

Those who summoned souls wore white sackcloth.

This place was called the assembly of the underworld,

The Palace of Yama, King of Hell.

As Taizong gazed at it from the outside, jade ornaments could be heard tinkling as they swung from the belts of officials, and rare

perfumes could be smelt. In front were two pairs of attendants holding lanterns, and behind them the ten generations of kings of the underworld came down the steps. The ten kings were the King of Qinguang, the King of Chujiang, King Songdi, King Wuguan, King Yama, King Impartial, King of Mount Tai, the Metropolitan King, the King of Biancheng, and the King of the Ever–turning Wheel. They came out of the Senluo Palace and bowed to Taizong in greeting. Taizong felt too humble to go forward.

"Your Majesty is a monarch in the world of light, but we are only kings in the world of darkness. It is therefore only right that we should do this, so why this excessive modesty?"

"We have offended against Your Majesties," replied Taizong, "so how can we venture to talk in terms of light and darkness, or men and ghosts?" After much yielding Taizong went into the Senluo Palace, and when they had finished bowing to each other they sat down as hosts and guest.

A moment later the King of Qinguang clasped his hands together and said, "Why is it that the ghost dragon of the River Jing has brought a case against Your Majesty, saying that he was executed despite your promise to save him?"

"I had a dream that an old dragon came to ask me to save him," replied Taizong, "and I did in fact promise that he would come to no harm; but as it turned out his crime was a capital one, for which he was due to be beheaded by the minister in the personnel department, Wei Zheng. We summoned Wei Zheng to come and play chess in the palace, and I never knew that he had beheaded the dragon in a dream. This happened because that officer can come and go miraculously, and also because the dragon king had committed a crime for which he deserved to die. We were in no way to blame for his death."

When the Ten Kings heard his statement they bowed and replied, "Even before that dragon was born it was written in the registers of the Southern Pole Star that he was destined to die at the hands of a personnel minister, as we have long been aware. But because he has been arguing about the matter we had to send for Your Majesty. When the case has been argued between the three orders we shall send him to the Revolving Prayer–wheel for reincarnation. We hope that Your Majesty will forgive us for forcing you to attend." Then they ordered the judge in charge of the Registers of Birth and Death to fetch them at once to see how long His Majesty was due to live. Judge Cui hurried to his office and took down the general register of the lengths

of the reigns Heaven had allowed to the kings of all the countries of the earth. As he was looking through it he saw to his horror that Emperor Taizong of the Great Tang in the Southern Jambu Continent was due to die in year 13 of his reign. He hurriedly seized a large brush soaked in ink, changed 13 into 33, then he handed the register up. The Ten Kings started at the beginning and read it through until they saw that Taizong was due to reign for thirty－three years.

"How long has Your Majesty been on the throne?" asked the shocked kings of hell.

"It is now thirteen years since my accession," Taizong replied.

"Then there is no need for Your Majesty to worry," said King Yama. "You have twenty years of life ahead of you. Now that you have answered these charges satisfactorily, will you please return to the World of Light."

On hearing this Taizong bowed and thanked the Ten Kings, who then ordered judge Cui and marshal Zhu to return Taizong his soul. As he was leaving the Senluo Palace Taizong raised his hand in salutation and asked the Ten Kings about the prospects for all the members of his family in his palace.

"Good," they replied, "except that Your Majesty's younger sister does not seem to be going to live much longer." Taizong bowed once more to express his thanks.

"When we return to the daylight we shall have nothing with which to show our gratitude except for fruit and melons."

"We have gourds, Eastern melons and Western melons, or water－melons, here, but no pumpkins, no Southern melons," said the Ten Kings.

"When we return to the world of the living we shall send some," replied Taizong, and with that they raised their clasped hands to each other, bowed, and parted.

The marshal, with a soul－guiding flag in his hand, led the way, and

Judge Cui followed with Taizong as they left the office of darkness. Taizong looked up and saw that they were not going the same way as they had come.

"Have we taken the wrong road?" he asked the judge, who replied, "No. In the underworld you can only go; you can never come back. We are now taking Your Majesty out through the Revolving Prayer −wheel; thus you will be able to tour the underworld on your way back to life." Taizong had no choice but to follow them as they led the way.

After a mile or two he saw a high mountain wrapped in dark clouds down to its foot, while a black mist blotted out the sky.

"What's that mountain over there, Mr. Cui?" he asked; and the judge replied, "That is the Dark Mountain of the underworld."

"However shall we cross it?" Taizong asked in terror.

"Have no fears, Your Majesty; your subjects will lead the way," answered the judge. Taizong followed them shivering and trembling, and when they had climbed the mountain he looked around him. He saw that it was Jagged,

Precipitous,

High as the Sichuan ranges,

Lofty as Lushan.

It is not a famous peak of the world of light,

But a crag of the underworld.

Ogres hidden in the clumps of thorns,

Evil monsters lurk behind the cliffs.

Your ears hear no calls of animals or birds,

The eyes can only see fiends.

A dark wind howls,

As black fog spreads.

The dark wind that howls

Is the smoke breathed from the mouths of magic soldiers;

The spreading black fog

Is the vapour belched out by hidden trolls.

Wherever you look the prospect is appalling;

All you can see to left or right is unbridled evil.

To be sure, there are hills,

Peaks,

Ranges,

Caves,

And gullies.

But no grass grows on the hills,

There is no sky for the peaks to touch.

No travelers cross the ranges,

The caves hold no clouds,

No water runs in the gullies.

Before the cliffs there are only goblins,

Below the ranges are trolls.

Savage ghosts shelter in the caves,

Evil spirits hide in the gullies.

Chapter 11

All around the mountain

Ox – headed and horse – faced demons howl and roar;

Half hidden from view,

Hungry ghosts and desperate spirits sob to each other.

The judge who claims men's lives

Cannot wait to deliver the letter;

The marshal who chases souls,

Shouts and roars as he hastens along with his documents.

The swift – footed ones

Swirl along like a tornado;

The catchers of souls

Stand as thick as clouds.

Thanks entirely to the protection of the judge, Taizong crossed the Dark Mountain.

As they continued on their way they went past very many courts, and from each of them piteous sounds assailed his ear, while the evil ghouls there struck terror into his heart.

"What place is this?" asked Taizong.

"It is the eighteen layers of hell that lie behind the Dark Mountain," the judge replied.

"What are the eighteen layers?" asked Taizong.

"Listen and I will tell you," the judge replied.

"The Hanging – by – the – Sinews Hell, the Hell of Injustice, and the Hell of the Pit of Fire.

Loneliness and desolation,

Misery and suffering.

All those here committed the thousand lower sins,

And were sent here for punishment after death.

Chapter 11

156

Journey to the West

The Fengdu Hell, the Tongue－extraction Hell, the Flaying Hell:
Howling and wailing,

Terrible anguish.

They offended against Heaven by not being loyal or filial;

They have Buddha－mouths but snake hearts, so fell down here.

The Grinding Hell, the Pounding Hell, the Hell of Drawing and Quartering.

Skin and flesh ripped and torn,

Lips rubbed away till the teeth show.

In the blindness of their hearts they did evil things;

For all their fine words they harmed others in secret.

The Ice Hell, the Skin－shedding Hell, the Disemboweling Hell.

Filthy faces and matted hair,

Frowning foreheads and sad eyes.

They all used false measures to cheat the foolish,

Thus piling up disasters for themselves.

The Oil－cauldron Hell, the Hell of Blackness, the Hell of the Mountain of Knives.

Shivering and trembling,

In terrible agony;

Because they used violence against the good

They cower and hunch their shoulders in their suffering.

The Hell of the Pool of Blood, the Avichi Hell, the Hell of the Steelyard Beam, Where skin is pulled away from the bone,

Arms are broken and tendons cut.

Because they killed for gain,

Butchering living creatures,

They fell into these torments that will not end in a thousand years;
Chapter 11

They will always lie here, never to escape.

Every one of them is tightly bound,

Knotted and roped.

Red – faced demons,

And black – faced demons,

Are sent with their long halberds and short swords.

Ox – headed fiends.

And horse – faced fiends,

With iron clubs and brazen hammers,

Beat them till their wincing faces flow with blood,

As they call on Heaven and Earth and get no answer.

Let no man alive have any illusions:

The devils carry out their orders and release nobody.

Good and evil will always be rewarded:

It is only a question of time."

Before they had gone much further a group of devil soldiers holding banners knelt down beside the road and said, "The Commissioners of the Bridges welcome you." The Judge shouted to them that they were to rise and led Taizong across a golden bridge. Taizong saw that there was a silver bridge beside it over which some loyal, filial, worthy, just, and upright people were passing, led by banners. There was a third bridge on the other side with an icy wind roaring across it and waves of blood boiling below amid unbroken howls and wails.

"What is that bridge called?" Taizong asked, and the Judge replied, "Your Majesty, that is called the Bridge of Punishment, and you must tell people about it when you return to the world of the living. Below the bridge there are

A narrow, precipitous path

Over a mighty, rushing river.

It is like a strip of cloth across the Yangtse,

Or a fiery pit rising up to Heaven.

The icy vapours freeze one to the bone;

Nauseating stenches assail the nostrils.

There is no boat to ferry you

Across the crashing waves.

All who appear are sinful ghosts

With bare feet and matted hair.

The bridge is many miles long

And only three fingers wide;

The drop is a hundred feet,

The waters are infinitely deeper.

Above there are no railings for support,

While trolls snatch their victims from below.

In cangues and bonds

They are driven along the dangerous path by the River of Punishment.

See the ferocity of the divine generals by the bridge;

Watch how the ghosts of the wicked suffer in the river.

On the branching trees

Hang silken clothes in blue, red, yellow and purple;

In front of the precipice

Squat lewd and shameless women who swore at their parents—in—law.

Copper snakes and iron dogs feast on them at will,

As they constantly fall in the river, never to escape.

There is a poem that goes:

As ghosts wail and spirits howl

The waves of blood tower high.

Countless ghouls with heads of bulls and horses

Guard the bridge with great ferocity.

The commissioners of the bridges had gone away while he was speaking. Taizong's heart was once more filled with horror, and he nodded his head and sighed silently in his distress, then followed the judge and the Marshal. Before long they crossed the evil River of Punishment and passed the terrors of the Bowl of Blood.

Then they came to the City of the Unjustly Slain. Amid the hubbub,

shouts of "Li Shimin's here, Li Shimin's here," could be made out, to the terror of Taizong. He saw that his way was blocked by a crowd of maimed and headless spectres.

"Give us back our lives," they were all shouting, "give us back our lives." The panic-stricken Taizong tried to hide, yelling, "Help, Judge Cui, help, help."

"Your Majesty," the judge replied, "these are the ghosts of the kings and chieftains of the sixty-four groups of rebels and the seventy-two troops of bandits. They were all killed unjustly, and nobody has given them a home or looked after them. They cannot get themselves reborn as they have no money for the journey, so they are all uncared-for cold and hungry ghosts. If Your Majesty is able to give them some money I can save you."

"I came here empty-handed," Taizong replied, "so where could I possibly get any money?"

"Your Majesty," the judge replied, "there is a man in the world of light who deposited a certain amount of money in the underworld. If Your Majesty is prepared to sign an I.O.U., I will endorse it, and we can borrow his store of money to distribute among these hungry ghosts; then we will be able to continue on our way,"

"Who is this man?" asked Taizong.

"He is a man of Kaifeng in Henan," the judge replied, "and his name is Xiang Liang. He has thirteen hoards of gold and silver down here, and if Your Majesty borrows them, all you have to do is repay them when you return to the world of light." Taizong was very pleased, and only too eager to borrow one. He signed an I.O.U.

at once and gave it to the judge, then borrowed a store, which he gave to the marshal to hand out.

"You are to share out this gold and silver and let your Lord of the Great Tang past," said the judge. "As it is too early in his life, I am under orders from the ten kings to return his soul and tell him to hold a Great Mass when he is back in the world of light to enable all of you to be reborn, so don't be making any more trouble."

When the ghosts heard what he had to say and were given the gold and silver they all withdrew, murmuring their obedient assent. The judge then told the marshal to wave his soul-leading flag, and Taizong was taken out of the City of the Unjustly Slain and floated

along the highway to the daylight.

After they had been going for a long time they reached the Wheel of the Six Paths of Being. Some people were soaring in the clouds, wearing cloaks of rosy mist. Others were being given office with golden insignia to hang from their waists. Monks and nuns, clergy and lay people, beasts of the field and birds of the air, ghosts and devils—all were pouring under the wheel and each was going along his allotted path.

"What's all this about?" asked the Tang Emperor.

"Your Majesty is a man of deep understanding," the judge replied. "You must be sure to remember all this and tell the living about it. It is called the Wheel of the Six Paths of Being. Those who have done good deeds rise on the Path of the Immortals; those who have been loyal are reborn on the Path of Honour; those who have done their duty to their parents lead their next life on the Path of Happiness; those who have been just return to life on the Path of Man; those who have accumulated merit are reborn on the Path of Wealth; and the evildoers fall down into the Path of Devils." On hearing this the Tang Emperor nodded and said with a sigh:

"Excellent, truly excellent,

The virtuous come to no harm.

The good heart is always mindful,

The way of goodness always lies open.

"Do not allow evil thoughts to arise;

Thus you will avoid all trouble.

Say not that there is no retribution;

Whether you become a god or a ghost is all determined.

The judge took Taizong straight to the Gate of Rebirth on the Path of Honour, bowed to him and said, "Your Majesty, this is the way out,

where I shall have to take my leave and go back. Marshal Zhu will escort you for the next stage of your journey."

"I have made you come an awfully long way, sir," said the Tang Emperor as he thanked him.

"When Your Majesty returns to the world of the living you absolutely must hold a Great Mass to enable those forlorn ghosts to be reborn," replied the judge. "Don't on any account forget, as there can only be peace on Earth if there are no vengeance – seeking ghosts in the underworld. Every single wrong will have to be corrected. Teach all people to be good, and then you will be able to assure the continuity of your line and the eternal security of your empire."

The Tang Emperor agreed to each of his proposals and took leave of him, then went through the gates with Marshal Zhu. Seeing a fine horse standing ready and saddled inside the gates, the marshal asked Taizong to mount it with the help of his assistants. The horse was as swift as an arrow, and it was soon at the banks of the River Wei, where a pair of golden carp could be seen sporting in the water. Taizong, captivated at the sight, pulled in his horse's reins and gazed at them.

"Your Majesty," the marshal said, "please keep moving. We have to enter the city early." But all the Tang Emperor wanted to do was to look. As he would not move on the marshal grabbed him by the feet and shouted, "Get moving. What are you waiting for?" as he pushed him off his horse and into the River Wei with a splash. Taizong was now free of the underworld and back in the world of the living.

Chapter 11

161

Journey to the West

The civil and military officials of the Tang court, Xu Maogong, Qin Shubao, Yuchi Jingde, Duan Zhixian, Ma Sanbao, Cheng Yaojin, Gao Shilian, Li Shiji, Fang Xuanling, Du Ruhui, Xiao Yu, Fu Yi, Zhang Daoyuan, Zhang Shiheng, Wang Gui and the others, as well as the empresses, imperial consorts and concubines, and pages were all in the White Tiger Hall. They were discussing whether to issue an edict of mourning to inform the world so that the heir could be put on the throne.

Wei Zheng was saying, "Gentlemen, stop this discussion. We must not

do that. If the country is alarmed, anything might happen. If we wait for another day our master is bound to come back to life." Xu Jingzong stepped forward from the lower ranks and protested, "Minister Wei is talking nonsense. As the old saying goes, 'split water can't be picked up and the dead can't come back to life.' What business have you to be spreading confusion with these groundless claims?"

"Mr. Xu," Wei Zheng replied, "I can say truthfully that I have been given instruction in the magic arts since childhood and my predictions are extremely accurate. I can assure you that I have saved His Majesty from death."

As they were arguing they heard loud shouts of "You're drowning me, you're drowning me," coming from the coffin. The civil officials and the generals were struck with terror; the empresses and consorts shivered. Every one of them had

A face as yellow as a mulberry—leaf after autumn,

A waist as weak as a willow sapling before spring.

The heir went weak at the knees,

As he stood in full mourning, unable to hold up his staff;

The attendants' souls flew away:

How would it do for them to be wearing mourning hats and clothes?

The consorts and concubines collapsed,

The palace beauties had to lie down.

When the consorts and concubines collapsed,

It was like a gale blowing down withered lotuses.

When the palace beauties lay down

It was like a rainstorm beating young lotuses down.

All the ministers were terrified

And their limbs went numb;

They shivered and shook,

Struck dumb and stupid.

The White Tiger Hall was like a bridge collapsing,

And the confusion round the coffin

Was like a temple falling down.

All the palace women fled, as not one of them dared to approach the imperial coffin. Luckily the upright Xu Maogong, the trusty Wei Zheng, the brave Qin Shubao, and the ferocious Yuchi Jingde went forward to put their hands on the coffin and shouted, "What is it that worries Your Majesty and makes you speak to us? Tell us, and do not haunt us and scare the royal family."

"His Majesty is not haunting us," Wei Zheng said. "His Majesty has come back to life. Bring tools at once."

They opened the coffin and found Taizong sitting up inside and still shouting, "You're drowning me. Save me, someone." Xu Maogong and the others helped him to his feet and said, "There is nothing to fear as you come round, Your Majesty. We are all here to protect you." The Tang Emperor then opened his eyes and said, "We have been having an awful time: after escaping from the evil demons of the underworld, we were drowned."

"Relax, Your Majesty, there is nothing to fear. How could you have drowned?" the ministers said. "We were riding along the banks of the River Wei and watching to fishes playing when that deceitful Marshal Zhu pushed us off the horse and made us fall into the river, where we all but drowned."

"Your Majesty still has something of the ghost about you," said Wei Zheng, and he ordered the Imperial Medical Academy to send medicinal potions to settle the spirit and calm the soul at once; he also sent for some thin gruel. After one or two doses of the medicine the Emperor returned to normal and regained full consciousness. The Tang Emperor had been dead for three days and nights before returning to rule the world of the living once more. There is a poem to prove it:

Since ancient times there have been changes of power;

Dynasties have always waxed and waned.

What deed of the kings of old could compare

With the Emperor of Tang returning to life?

As it was evening by then the ministers asked the Emperor to go to bed, and they all dispersed.

The next day they all took off their mourning garments and put colorful clothes back on. Wearing red robes and black hats, and with their golden seals of office hanging from purple ribbons at their waists, they stood outside the gates of the court awaiting the summons. As for Taizong, after taking the medicine to settle his spirit and calm his soul and drinking some thin gruel he was helped to his bedroom by his ministers. He slept soundly all night, building up his energies, and at dawn he rose. See how he was arrayed as he summoned up his authority:

On his head a hat that thrust into the sky;

On his body a dark yellow robe

Girt with a belt of Lantian jade;

On his feet a pair of Shoes of Success.

The dignity of his bearing

Surpasses all others at court.

His awesome majesty

Is today restored.

What a peaceful and wise Great Tang Emperor,

The king named Li who can die and rise again.

The Tang Emperor entered the throne hall, and when the two groups of civil and military officials had finished acclaiming him they divided into sections according to their ranks. When they heard the decree, "Let all those with business step forward from their sections and submit memorials, and let those with no business retire," Xu Maogong, Wei Zheng, Wang Gui, Du Ruhui, Fang Xuanling, Yuan Tiangang, Li Chunfeng, Xu Jingzong and others stepped forward on the Eastern side; and on the Western side Yin Kaishan, Liu Hongji, Ma Sanbao, Duan Zhixian, Cheng Yaojin, Qin Shubao, Yuchi Jingde, Xue Rengui and others stepped forward also.

They advanced together, bowed low before the white jade steps, and asked in a memorial, "Why did it take Your Majesty so long to awake from your dream the other day?"

To this Taizong replied, "The other day we took Wei Zheng's letter and felt our soul leaving the palace. The horsemen of the Imperial Guard asked us to go hunting with them, and as we were going along the men and their horses all vanished. His Late Majesty and our dead brothers appeared and started to shout at us in a quarrelsome way. Things were getting very awkward when we saw a man in a black hat and gown who turned out to be the judge Cui Jue. When he had shouted at my dead brothers and driven them away we gave him Wei Zheng's letter. As he was reading it some servants in black holding banners led us in and took us to the Senluo Palace, where the Ten Kings of Hell were all sitting. They said that the dragon of the River Jing had falsely accused us of deliberately killing him after we had promised to save him, so we gave them a full account of what we told you about before. They said that the case had now been settled between the three orders, and ordered that the Registers of Birth and Death be brought at once so that they could see how long we were due to live. Judge Cui handed up the register, and they saw in it that we were due to reign for thirty – three years, which meant that we had another twenty years of life in front of us. They told Marshal Zhu and Judge Cui to escort us back. We took our leave of the Ten Kings and promised to send them some pumpkins and fruit as a mark of our thanks. After leaving the Senluo Palace we saw in the underworld how the disloyal, the unfilial, those who do not observe the rules of propriety, wasters of foodgrains, bullies, cheats, those who use false measures, adulterers, robbers, hypocrites, deceivers, debauchees, swindlers and the Chapter 11

like undergo the agonies of being ground, burnt, pounded and sliced, and suffer the torments of being fried, boiled, hung in mid – air, and skinned. There were tens of thousands of them, far more than our eyes could take in. Then we went through the City of the Unjustly Slain where there were countless ghosts of the wrongly killed, and all of them, the chieftains of the sixty – four groups of rebels and the spirits of the seventy – two bands of rebels, blocking our way. Luckily Judge Cui acted as our guarantor and lent us one of the hoards of gold and silver of a Mr. Xiang of Henan, with which we were able to buy them

off and continue on our way.

Judge Cui told us that when we returned to the world of the living we had an inescapable obligation to hold a Great Mass to enable all those forlorn ghosts to be reborn, and with these instructions he took his leave. When I came out under the Wheel of the Six Paths of Being Marshal Zhu invited us to mount a horse. This horse seemed to fly to the banks of the River Wei, where I saw a pair of fish sporting in the water. Just as we were enjoying this sight the marshal grabbed our legs and tipped us into the water, and with that we returned to life."

When the ministers had heard this they all congratulated him and they compiled a record of it; and all the prefectures and counties of the empire sent in memorials of felicitation.

Taizong issued a decree of amnesty for all the convicted criminals in the empire and ordered inquiries into the cases of all those held in jail on serious charges. The inspectors submitted to the throne the names of more than four hundred criminals who had been sentenced by the Ministry of Punishments to beheading or strangulation, and Taizong gave them a stay of execution, allowing them to go home to see their families and give their property to their relations; on the same day the following year they were to report to the authorities for their sentences to be carried out. The criminals thanked him for his mercy and withdrew. He also issued a notice about charity for orphans and released three thousand women of all ages from the palace to be married to members of the army. From then on all was well within and without the palace. There is a poem to prove it: Vast is the mercy of the great Tang Emperor;

He surpasses Yao and Shun in making the people prosper.

Four hundred condemned men all left their prisons,

Three thousand mistreated women were released from the palace.

All the officials of the empire proclaim the monarch's long life; The ministers at court congratulate the Great Dragon.

Heaven responds to the thoughts of the good heart,

Its blessing will protect his seventeen successors.

When he had released the women from the palace and let the condemned men out of prison he issued a notice that was posted throughout the empire. It read:

"Great are Heaven and Earth;

Sun and Moon shine clearly.

Although the universe is vast,

Earth and sky have no room for evil plots.

If you use your wits and skill to cheat people,

You will get retribution in this life;

If you are good at giving and ask for little,

You are sure to find a reward before your future life.

A thousand cunning plans

Cannot compare with living according to one's lot;

Ten thousand kinds of robbers

Are no match for those who live frugally and accept their fate.

If you are good and merciful in thought and deed,

What need is there to bother to read the scriptures?

If your mind is full of malice towards others,

To read the whole of the Buddha's canon would be a waste of time."

From then on everyone in the country did good deeds. Another notice was issued calling for a worthy man to take pumpkins to the underworld, and at the same time Yuchi Jingde, the Duke of E, was sent to Kaifeng in Henan to visit Xiang Liang and pay him back a hoard of jewels and a hoard of gold and silver. Some days after the notice had been issued a worthy man called Liu Quan from Junzhou came forward to deliver the pumpkins. He came from a family worth ten thousand strings of cash. When his wife Li Cuilian had taken a gold pin from her hair to give as an offering to a monk at the gate, Liu

Quan had cursed her for being a loose wife who would not stay in the women's quarters. Li Cuilian, bitterly resenting this, had hanged herself, leaving a little boy and girl who had been crying night and day ever since. Liu Quan, unable to bear it any longer, wanted only to end his own life and abandon his family and his children. For this reason he had volunteered to deliver the pumpkins in death and came to the Tang Emperor with the imperial notice in his hand. The Emperor ordered him to go to the Golden Pavilion, where he was to put a pair of pumpkins on his head and some gold in his sleeve and drink poison.

Liu Quan drank the poison and died. In an instant his soul appeared at the Devil Gate with the pumpkins on his head. The demon officer at the gate asked, "Who are you, and how did you come here?"

"I have come on the orders of Emperor Taizong of the Great Tang to present some pumpkins to the Ten Kings of Hell." The officer was only too pleased to let him in, and he went straight to the Senluo Palace, and when he was given audience with the Kings of Hell he presented the pumpkins to them and said, "I have brought these pumpkins a great distance in obedience to the decree of the Tang Emperor, who wishes to thank Your Majesties for their great mercy to him."

"How splendid of the Tang Emperor to be as good as his word," exclaimed the ten delighted kings as they accepted the pumpkins. Then they asked him what he was called and where he was from.

"I am a commoner of the city of Junzhou," he replied, "and my name is Liu Quan. As my wife Miss Li hanged herself and left a boy and a girl with nobody to look after them I wanted to abandon my family and children by giving my life for my country, so I brought this offering of pumpkins on behalf of my sovereign, who wanted to thank Your Majesties for your great mercy." On hearing this the Ten Kings ordered a search for Liu Quan's wife, Miss Li. The devil messengers soon brought her to the Senluo Palace, outside which Liu Quan was reunited with her. They thanked the Ten Kings for their kindness and told them about the harsh words that had been spoken. On consulting the Registers of Birth and Death, the kings found that they were fated to become Immortals, so they ordered demon officers to take them

back at once. The demon officers, however, asked in a report, "As Li Cuilian has been dead for some time her body has perished, so what is her soul to be attached to?"

"Li Yuying, the sister of the Tang Emperor, is due to die a sudden death today," said the Kings of Hell, "so we can borrow her body to put Li Cuilian's soul back into." On receiving this order the demon officers took Liu Quan and his wife out of the underworld to be brought back to life. If you don't know how they returned to life, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 12

The Tang Emperor Keeps Faith and Holds a Great Mass

Guanyin Appears to the Reincarnated Golden Cicada

When the devil officers left the underworld with Liu Quan and his wife, a dark and whirling wind blew them straight to the great capital Chang'an, where Liu Quan's soul was sent to the Golden Pavilion and Li Cuilian's to an inner courtyard of the palace, where Princess Yuying could be seen walking slowing beside some moss under the shade of some blossoming trees. Suddenly the devil officers struck her full in the chest and knocked her over; they snatched the soul from her living body and put Li Cuilian's soul into the body in its place. With that they returned to the underworld.

When the palace serving—women saw her drop dead they rushed to the throne hall to report to the three empresses that Her Royal Highness the Princess had dropped dead. The shocked empresses passed the news on to Taizong who sighed and said, "We can well believe it. When we asked the Ten Lords of Hell if young and old in our palace would all be well, they replied that they would all be well except that our younger sister was going to die suddenly. How true that was."

He and everyone else in the palace went with great sorrow to look at her lying under the trees, only to see that she was breathing very lightly.

"Don't wail," the Tang Emperor said, "don't wail; it might alarm her." Then he raised her head with his own hand and said, "Wake up, sister, wake up."

All of a sudden the princess sat up and called out, "Don't go so fast, husband. Wait for me."

"Sister, we're waiting for you here," said the Emperor.

The princess lifted her head, opened her eyes, and looked at him. "Who are you?" she asked. "How dare you put your hands on us?"

"It's your august brother, royal sister," replied Taizong.

"I've got nothing to do with august brothers and royal sisters," said the princess. "My maiden name is Li, and my full name is Li Cuilian. My husband is Liu Quan, and we both come from Junzhou. When I gave a gold hairpin to a monk at the gate three months ago my husband said harsh words to me about leaving the women's quarters and not behaving as a good wife should. It made me so angry and upset that I hanged myself from a beam with a white silk sash, leaving a boy and a girl who cried all night and all day. As my husband was commissioned by the Tang Emperor to go to he underworld to deliver some pumpkins, the Kings of Hell took pity on us and let the two of us come back to life. He went ahead, but I lagged behind. When I tried to catch him up I tripped. You are all quite shameless to be mauling me like this. I don't even know your names."

"We think that Her Royal Highness is delirious after passing out when she fell," said Taizong to the palace women. He sent an order to the Medical Academy for some medicinal potions, and helped Yuying into the palace.

When the Tang Emperor was back in his throne—hall, one of his aides came rushing in to report, "Your Majesty, Liu Quan, the man who delivered the pumpkins, is awaiting your summons outside the palace gates."

The startled Taizong immediately sent for Liu Quan, who prostrated himself before the vermilion steps of the throne.

"What happened when you presented the pumpkins?" asked the Tang Emperor.

"Your subject went straight to the Devil Gate with the pumpkins on my head. I was taken to the Senluo Palace where I saw the Ten Kings

of Hell, to whom I presented the pumpkins, explaining how very grateful my emperor was. The Kings of Hell were very pleased. They bowed in Your Majesty's honour and said, 'How splendid of the Tang Emperor to be as good as his word.'"

"What did you see in the underworld?" asked the Emperor.

"I did not go very far there so I did not see much. But when the kings asked me where I was from and what I was called, I told them all about how I had volunteered to leave my family and my children to deliver the pumpkins because my wife had hanged herself. They immediately ordered demon officers to bring my wife, and we were reunited outside the Senluo Palace. Meanwhile they inspected the Registers of Births and Deaths and saw that my wife and I were both due to become Immortals, so they sent devil officers to bring us back. I went ahead with my wife following behind, and although I was fortunate enough to come back to life, I don't know where her soul has been put."

"What did the Kings of Hell say to you about your wife?" asked the astonished Emperor.

"They didn't say anything," replied Liu Quan, "but I heard a demon officer say, 'As Li Cuilian has been dead for some time her body has decomposed.' To this the Kings of Hell said, 'Li Yuying of the Tang house is due Chapter 12

to die today, so we can borrow her body to put Li Cuilian's soul back into.' As I don't know where this Tang house is or where she lives, I haven't been able to go and look for her yet."

The Tang Emperor, who was now very pleased, said to his officials, "When we were leaving the Kings of Hell, we asked them about our family. They said all its members would be well except for my sister. She collapsed and died under the shade of some blossoming trees, and when we hurried over to support her she came to, shouting 'Don't go so fast, husband. Wait for me.' We thought at the time that she was just talking deliriously after passing out, but when we asked her to tell us more her story tallied precisely with Liu Quan's."

"If Her Royal Highness died suddenly and came to shortly afterwards talking like this, then it means that Liu Quan's wife must have

borrowed her body to come back to life," said Wei Zheng. "Things like this do happen.

The princess should be asked to come out so that we can hear what she says."

"We have just ordered the Imperial Medical Academy to send some medicine, so we don't know whether it will be possible," said the Tang Emperor, who then sent a consort into the palace to ask her to come out. The princess, meanwhile, was shouting wildly inside the palace, "I'm taking none of your medicine. This isn't my home. My home is a simple tiled house, not like this jaundiced, yellow place with its flashy doors. Let me out, let me out."

Four of five women officials and two or three eunuchs appeared while she was shouting and helped her go straight to the throne hall, where the Tang Emperor asked, "Would you recognize your husband if you saw him?"

"What a thing to ask! We've been married since we were children, and I've given him a son and a daughter, so of course I'd recognize him." The Emperor told his attendants to help her down and she went down from the throne hall. As soon as she saw Liu Quan in front of the white jade steps she seized hold of him.

"Husband!" she exclaimed, "where did you go? Why didn't you wait for me? I tripped over, and all these shameless people surrounded me and shouted at me. Wasn't that shocking?" Although Liu Quan could hear that it was his wife talking, she looked like somebody else, so he did not dare to recognize her as his wife.

"Indeed," said the Emperor,

"Sometimes mountains collapse and the earth yawns open,

But few men will shorten their lives to die for another."

As he was a good and wise monarch he gave all of the princess' dressing—cases, clothes and jewelry to Liu Quan as if they were a dowry, presented him with an edict freeing him from labor service for life, and told him to take the princess home with him. Husband and wife thanked him before the steps and returned home very happily. There is a poem to prove it:

Life and death are pre—ordained;

Some have many years, others few.

When Liu Quan came back to the light after taking the pumpkins, Li Cuilian returned to life in a borrowed body.

After leaving the Emperor the pair went straight back to the city of Junzhou, where they found that their household and their children were all well. There is no need to go into how the two of them publicized their virtue rewarded.

The story turns to Lord Yuchi, who went to Kaifeng in Henan with a hoard of gold and silver for Xiang Liang, who made a living by selling water and dealing in black pots and earthenware vessels with his wife, whose maiden name was Zhang, at the gate of their house. When they made some money they were content to keep enough for their daily expenses, giving the rest as alms to monks or using it to buy paper ingots of gold and silver, which they assigned to various hoards in the underworld and burnt. That was why they were now to be so well rewarded. Although he was only a pious pauper in this world, he owned mountains of jade and gold in the other one. When Lord Yuchi brought them the gold and silver, Mr. and Mrs. Xiang were terrified out of their wits. Apart from his lordship there were also officials from the local government office, and horses and carriages were packed tight outside their humble cottage. The two of them fell to their knees dumbfounded and began to kowtow.

"Please rise," said Lord Yuchi. "Although I am merely an imperial commissioner, I bring gold and silver from His Majesty to return to you." Shivering and shaking Xiang Liang replied, "I've lent out no silver or gold, so how could I dare to accept this mysterious wealth?"

"I know that your are a poor man," said Lord Yuchi, "but you have given monks everything they need and bought paper ingots of gold and silver which you have assigned to the underworld and burnt, thus accumulating large sums of money down there. When His Majesty the Emperor Taizong was dead for three days before returning to life he borrowed one of your hoards of gold and silver down there, which he is now repaying to you in full. Please check it through so that I can go back and report that I have carried out my instructions." Xiang Liang and his wife just went on bowing to Heaven and refused to take the

gold and silver.

"If humble folk like ourselves took all this gold and silver it'd soon be the death of us. Although we have burned some paper and assigned it to various stores, it was a secret. Anyhow, what proof is there that His Majesty— —may he live for ten thousand years— —borrowed gold and silver down there? We refuse to accept it."

"The Emperor said that Judge Cui was his guarantor when he borrowed your money, and this can be verified, so please accept it," replied Lord Yuchi.

"I would sooner die than do so," said Xiang Liang.

Seeing how earnestly he refused Lord Yuchi had to send a man back with a detailed report to the throne. On reading this report that Xiang Liang had refused to accept the gold and silver, Taizong said, "He really is a pious old fellow." He sent orders to Yuchi Jingde that he was to build a temple in his name, erect a shrine to him, and invite monks to do good deeds on his behalf: this would be as good as paying him back the gold and silver. On the day this decree reached him Yuchi Jingde turned towards the palace to thank the Emperor, and read it aloud for all to hear. Then he bought fifty mu of land at a place inside the city that would not be in the way from either the civil or the military point of view, and here work was begun on a monastery to be called The Imperially Founded Xiang Quo Monastery. To its left was erected a shrine to Mr. and Mrs. Xiang with an Chapter 12

inscribed tablet that read "Built under the supervision of Lord Yuchi." This is the present Great Xiang Guo Monastery.

When he was informed that work had been completed Taizong was very pleased, and assembling the multitude of officials he issued a notice summoning monks to come and hold a Great Mass for the rebirth of those lonely souls in the underworld. As the notice traveled throughout the empire the local officials everywhere recommended holy and venerable monks to go to Chang'an for the service. By the end of the month many monks had arrived in Chang'an from all over the empire. The Emperor issued a decree ordering Fu Yi, the Deputy Annalist, to select some venerable monks to perform Buddhist ceremonies. On hearing this command Fu Yi sent up a memorial

requesting a ban on the building of pagodas and saying that there was no Buddha. It read:

By the Law of the West there are no distinctions between ruler and subject or between father and son; the Three Paths and the Six Roads are used to deceive the foolish; past sins are chased away to filch future blessings; and Sanskrit prayers are recited in attempts to avoid retribution. Now birth, death and the length of life are in fact decided by nature; and punishments, virtue, power and blessings come from the lord of men.

But these days vulgar believers distort the truth and say that they all come from Buddha. In the time of the Five Emperors and Three Kings of antiquity this Buddha did not exist, yet rulers were enlightened, subjects were loyal, and prosperity lasted for many a long year. When foreign gods were first established in the time of Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty, sramanas from the West began to propagate their religion. This is in reality a foreign encroachment on China, and it does not merit belief.

When he had heard this read to him Taizong tossed it to his other officials for debate. The minister Xiao Yu stepped forward from the ranks, kowtowed and said, "The Buddha's law has flourished for several dynasties, and by spreading good and preventing evil it gives unseen help to the state; there is no reason why it would be abolished. Buddha was a sage. Those who deny sages are lawless. I request that he be severely punished." Fu Yi argued with Xiao Yu, pointing out that correct behavior was derived from serving one's parents and one's sovereign, whereas the Buddha turned his back on his parents, resisting the Son of Heaven although he was but a commoner, and rebelling against his mother and father with the body that they gave him. Xiao Yu had not been born in an empty mulberry tree, but he honoured a religion that denied fathers; this indeed proved that he who had no sense of filial piety denied his father.

All Xiao Yu did was to put his hands together and say, "Hell must have been made for men such as him."

Taizong sent for the High Chamberlain Zhang Daoyuan and the Head of the Secretariat Zhang Shiheng to ask them how effectively Buddhist ritual obtained blessings.

"The Buddha dwells in purity, benevolence and mercy," the two officers replied, "and the True Result is Buddha – emptiness. Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou Dynasty placed the Three Teachings in an

order. The Chan Master Dahui wrote a poem in praise of the distant and mysterious. If the masses support monks, anything can happen. The Five Patriarchs came down to their mothers' wombs, and Bodhidharma appeared.

From remotest antiquity everyone has said that the Three Teachings are highly venerable and cannot be destroyed or abolished. We humbly beg Your Majesty to give us his perceptive ruling."

"Your submission makes sense," said the delighted Taizong. "If anyone else makes further comments, he will be punished." He then ordered Wei Zheng, Xiao Yu and Zhang Daoyuan to invite all the monks and select one of great virtue to be Master of Ceremonies. They all bowed to thank him and withdrew. From then on there was a new law: anyone who injured a monk or slandered the Buddha would lose his arm.

Chapter 12

171

Journey to the West

The next day the three court officials assembled all the monks at the altar among rivers and hills, and they went through them all one by one. From among them they chose a venerable and virtuous monk. Do you know who he was?

Fully versed in the basic mystery, his title was Golden Cicada; But because he did not want to hear the Buddha preach

He transferred to the mortal world to suffer torment,

Was born among the common mortals to fall into the net.

From the moment he entered the womb he met with evil,

Before he left it he encountered a gang of villains.

His father was Top Graduate Chen from Haizhou,

His grandfather a senior imperial commander.

His birth offended the meteor that dropped into the water,

He drifted with the current and followed the waves.

Jinshan Island had a great destiny:

The abbot Qian'an brought him up.

Only at seventeen did he meet his mother,

And go to the capital to find his grandfather.

Commander Yin Kaishan, raising a great army,

Wiped out and punished the bandits at Hongzhou.

Graduate Chen Guangrui escaped from the heavenly net,

And father and son were happily reunited.

Accepting the invitation he receives once more the monarch's grace,
And his fame is spread as he climbs the lofty tower.

Refusing to take office he wants to be a monk,

So as sramana of the Hongfu Temple he learns about the Way,

The child of an ancient Buddha who used to be called Jiangliu,
Chapter 12

And took the dharma – name of Chen Xuanzang.

That day the Reverend Xuanzang was chosen from among all the monks. He had been a monk from infancy, and ever since birth he had eaten vegetarian food and observed the prohibitions. His maternal grandfather was an imperial commander, Yin Kaishan. His father Chen Guangrui had come top in the Palace Examination and had been appointed a grand secretary in the Imperial Library. Xuanzang, however, had no interest in honour and glory, and his only joy was to cultivate Nirvana. Investigation revealed that his origins were good and his virtue great; of the thousand sutras and ten thousand holy books there was not a single one that he did not know; he could sing every Buddhist chant and knew all the religious music. The three officials took him to the imperial presence, where they danced and stirred up the dust. When they had bowed they reported, "Your subject Xiao Yu and the rest of us have chosen a venerable monk called Chen Xuanzang in obedience to the imperial decree."

On hearing his name Taizong thought deeply for a long time and then asked, "Is that the Xuanzang who is the son of Grand Secretary Chen Guangrui?"

"Your subject is he," replied Xuanzang with a kowtow.

"Then you were indeed well chosen," said the Emperor with satisfaction. "You are indeed a monk of virtuous conduct of a mind devoted to meditation. I give you the offices of Left Controller of the Clergy, Right Controller of the Clergy, and Hierarch of the Empire." Xuanzang kowtowed to express his thanks and accepted the appointments. The Emperor then gave him a multicolored golden cassock and a Vairocana miter, telling him to be sure he conscientiously continued to visit enlightened monks, and giving him the position at the top of the hierarchy. He gave him a decree in writing ordering him to go to the Huasheng Temple to pick a propitious day and hour on which to begin the recitations of the scriptures.

Xuanzang bowed, took the decree, and went to the Huasheng Temple where he assembled many monks, had meditation benches made, prepared for the mass, and chose the music. He selected a total of twelve hundred high and humble monks of enlightenment, who he divided into an upper, a middle and a lower hall. All the holy objects were neatly arranged before all the Buddhas. The third day of the ninth month of that year was chosen an auspicious day on which to start the seven times seven days of the Great Land and Water Mass.

This was all reported to the throne, and at the appointed time Taizong, the high civil and military officials, and the royal family went to the service to burn incense and listen to the preaching. There is a poem to prove it that goes:

At the dragon assembly in the thirteenth year of Zhen Guan

The Emperor called a great meeting to talk about the scriptures.

At the assembly they began to expound the unfathomable law,

While clouds glowed above the great shrine.

The Emperor in his grace orders the building of a temple;

The Golden Cicada sheds his skin to edify the West.

Chapter 12

He spreads the news that rewards for goodness save from ill,

Preaching the doctrine of the three Buddhas of past and future.

In the year jisi, the thirteenth of *Zhen Guan,* on the day jiaxu, the third of the ninth month, the Hierarch Chen Xuanzang assembled twelve hundred venerable monks at the Huasheng Temple in the city of Chang'an for a chanting of all the holy scriptures. After morning court was over the Emperor left the throne hall in his dragon and phoenix chariot at the head of a host of civil and military officials and went to the temple to burn incense.

What did the imperial chariot look like? Indeed

Propitious vapours filled the sky

That shone with ten thousand beams of sacred light.

A mellow breeze blew softly,

The sunlight was strangely beautiful.

A thousand officials with jade at their belts walked in due order.

The banners of the five guards are drawn up on either side.

Holding golden gourds,

Wielding battle – axes,

They stand in pairs;

Lamps of purple gauze,

Imperial censers,

Make majestic clouds.

Dragons fly and phoenixes dance,

Ospreys and eagles soar.

True is the enlightened Son of Heaven,

Good are his just and loyal ministers.

This age of prosperity surpasses the time of Shun and Yu;

The eternal peace he has given outdoes that of Yao and Tang.

Under a parasol with curved handle

Chapter 12

174

Journey to the West

The dragon robe sweeps in,

Dazzling bright.

Interlocking jade rings,

Coloured phoenix fans,

Shimmer with a magic glow.

Pearl crowns and belts of jade,

Gold seals on purple cords.

A thousand regiments of soldiers protect the imperial chariot, Two lines of generals carry the royal chair.

Bathed and reverent, the Emperor comes to worship the Buddha,

Submitting to the True Achievement as he joyfully burns incense.

When the carriage of the Tang Emperor reached the temple, orders were given to stop the music as he descended from the vehicle and went at the head of his officials to bow to the Buddha and burn incense. When he had done this three times he looked up and saw what a magnificent assembly it was: Dancing banners,

Flying canopies.

When the banners danced

The sky shook with the clouds of silk;

When the canopies flew

The sun gleamed as the red lightning flashed.

Perfect the image of the statue of the Honoured One,

Mighty the grandeur of the Arhats' countenances.

Magic flowers in a vase,

Censers burning sandalwood and laka.

As the fairy flowers stand in vases

Trees like brocade fill the temple with their brightness.

As the censers burn sandalwood and laka

Clouds of incense rise to the azure heaven.

Fresh fruit of the season is piled in vermilion dishes,

Exotic sweets are heaped on the silk – covered tables.

Serried ranks of holy monks intone the surras

To save abandoned souls from suffering.

Taizong and his civil and military officials all burned incense, bowed to the golden body of the Lord Buddha, and paid their respects to the Arhats. The Hierarch Chen Xuanzang then led all the monks to bow to the Emperor, and when this was over they divided into their groups and went to their meditation places while the Hierarch showed the Emperor the notice about the delivery of the lonely ghosts. It read:

"Mysterious is the ultimate virtue, and the Sect of Meditation leads to Nirvana. The purity of the truth is all – knowing; it pervades the Three Regions of the universe. Through its countless changes it controls the Negative and Positive; unbounded are the embodiments of the eternal reality. In considering those forlorn ghosts one should be deeply distressed. At the sacred command of Taizong we have assembled some chosen monks for meditation and preaching. He has opened wide the gates of enlightenment and rowed far the boat of mercy,

saving all the beings in the sea of suffering, and delivering those who had long been afflicted by the six ways of existence. They will be led back to the right road and revel in the great chaos; in action and in passivity they will be at one with primal simplicity. For this wonderful cause they are invited to see the purple gates of the pure capital, and through our assembly they will escape from the confines of Hell to climb to the World of Bliss and be free, wandering as they please in the Paradise of the West. As the poem goes: A burner of incense of longevity,

A few spells to achieve rebirth.

The infinite Law is proclaimed,

The boundless mercy of Heaven is shown.

When sins are all washed away,

The neglected souls leave Hell.

We pray to protect our country;

May it stay at peace and be blessed."

Chapter 12

176

Journey to the West

When he had read this the Tang Emperor's heart was filled with happiness and he said to the monks, "Hold firm to your sincerity and never allow yourselves a moment's slackness in the service of the Buddha. Later on, when the Assembly is over, you will be blessed and we shall richly reward you. You shall certainly not have labored in vain." The twelve hundred monks all kowtowed to thank him. When the three vegetarian meals for the day were over the Tang Emperor went back to the palace. He was invited to come back to the Grand Assembly to burn incense once more on the seventh day. As evening was now drawing in all the officials went away. It was a fine evening:

A light glow suffused the boundless sky;

A few crows were late in finding their roosts.

Lamps were lit throughout the city as all fell still;

It was just the hour for the monks to enter the trance.

We will omit a description of the night or of how the monks intoned the scriptures when their master took his seat again the next morning.

The Bodhisattva Guanyin from Potaraka Island in the Southern Sea had been long in Chang'an, looking on the Buddha's orders for the man to fetch the scriptures, but she had not yet found anyone really virtuous. Then she heard that Taizong was propagating the True Achievement and selecting venerable monks for a Grand Assembly, and when she saw that the Master of Ceremonies was the monk Jiangliu who was really a Buddha's son came down from the realms of supreme bliss, an elder whom she herself had led into his earthly mother's womb, she was very pleased. She took her disciple Moksa and the treasures that the Buddha had given her out on the street to offer them for sale.

Do you know what these treasures were? There was a precious brocade cassock and — a monastic staff with nine rings. She also had those three golden bands, but she put them away safely for future use; she was only selling the cassock and the staff.

There was a monk in Chang'an city too stupid to be chosen for the service but who nonetheless had some ill — gotten banknotes. When he saw the bald, scabby, barefoot figure wearing a tattered robe — — the form the Bodhisattva had taken — — offering the cassock of dazzling beauty for sale he went up and asked, "How much d'you want for that cassock, Scabby?"

"The price of the cassock is five thousand ounces of silver and the staff two thousand," replied the Bodhisattva. The stupid monk roared with laughter.

"You must be a nutcase, Scabby, or else a dope. Those two lousy things wouldn't be worth that much unless they gave you immortality and turned you into a Buddha. No deal. Take'em away."

Not bothering to argue, the Bodhisattva walked on with Moksa. After they had been going for quite a long time they found themselves in front of the Donghua Gate of the palace, where the minister Xiao Yu happened to be returning home from morning court. Ignoring the crowd of lictors who were shouting to everyone to get Chapter 12

out of the way, the Bodhisattva calmly went into the middle of the road with the cassock in her hands and headed straight for the minister. When the minister reined in his horse to look he saw the cassock gleaming richly and sent an attendant to ask its price.

"I want five thousand ounces of silver for the cassock and two thousand for the staff," said the Bodhisattva.

"What's so good about the cassock to make it worth that much?" asked Xiao Yu.

"On the one hand it is good and on the other it isn't," replied the Bodhisattva. "On the one hand it has a price and on the other it hasn't."

"What's good about it and what isn't?" asked the minister.

"Whoever wears this cassock of mine will not sink into the mire, will not fall into Hell, will not be ensnared by evil and will not meet disaster from tiger or wolf: these are its good points. But as for a stupid monk who is greedy and debauched, who takes delight in the sufferings of others, does not eat vegetarian food, and breaks the monastic bans; or a common layman who harms the scriptures and slanders the Buddha— —such people have great difficulty even in seeing this cassock of mine: that is its disadvantage."

"What did you mean by saying that it both has a price and hasn't got one?" asked the minister, continuing his questions.

"Anyone who doesn't obey the Buddha's Law or honour the Three Treasures but still insists on buying the cassock and the staff will have to pay seven thousand ounces for them: in that case they have a price. But if anyone who honors the Three Treasures, takes pleasure in goodness, and believes in our Buddha, wants to have them, then I'll give him the cassock and staff as a gift. In that case they have no price." Xiao Yu's cheeks coloured, showing that he was a good man, and he dismounted to greet the Bodhisattva.

"Elder of the Great Law," he said, "forgive me. Our Great Tang Emperor is a true lover of goodness, and every one of the civil and military officials in his court acts piously. This cassock would be just right for the Hierarch, Master Chen Xuanzang, to wear in the Great Land and Water Mass that is now being conducted.

You and I shall go into the palace to see His Majesty."

The Bodhisattva gladly followed him as he turned around and went straight in through the Donghua Gate. The eunuchs reported their arrival, and they were summoned to the throne hall. Xiao Yu led the two scabby monks in, and they stood beneath the steps of the throne.

"What have you come to report, Xiao Yu?" the Emperor asked. Xiao Yu prostrated himself in front of the steps and replied, "When your subject went out through the Donghua Gate I met two monks who were selling a cassock and a staff. It occurred to me that this cassock would be suitable for Master Xuanzang to wear. So I have brought the monks for an audience with Your Majesty." The delighted Taizong asked how much the cassock cost. Still standing beneath the steps, and not making any gestures of courtesy, the Bodhisattva and Moksa replied, "The cassock costs five thousand ounces of silver, and the staff two thousand."

"What advantages does the cassock have to make it worth so much?" the Emperor asked. To this the Bodhisattva replied:

"This cassock

Has a strand of dragon cape,

To save from being eaten by the Roc,

And a thread of a stork jacket,

To deliver from mortality and lead to sainthood.

When one sits

Ten thousand spirits come to pay homage;

In all your actions

The Seven Buddhas will be with you.

"This cassock is made of silk reeled from giant ice – worms, Twisted into yarn by skilful craftsmen,

Woven by fairy beauties,

Finished by goddesses.

The strips of cloth are joined with embroidered seams,

Each piece thick with brocade.

The openwork decoration has a flower pattern

Shimmering with color, shining with jeweled beauty.

The wearer of the cassock is wreathed in red mist,

And when it is taken off, coloured clouds fly.

Its primal light slipped out through the Three Gates of Heaven, The magic vapour arose before the Five Sacred Peaks.

It is embroidered with layer upon layer of passion – flowers,

And gleams with pearls that shine like stars.

At the four corners are night – shining pearls,

Set at the top is an emerald.

Although it does not completely illuminate the Original Body

It shines with the light of the Eight Treasures.

"This cassock

Is normally kept folded,

And will only be worn by a sage.

When kept folded,

A rainbow shines through its thousand layers of wrapping;

When it is worn by a sage,

It will astonish the heavenly spirits and scare all demons.

On top is an as – you – wish pearl,

A Mani Pearl,

A dust – repelling pearl,

And a wind – calming pearl;

There is also red agate,

Purple coral,

Night – shining pearls,

And relics of the Buddha.

They steal the white of the moon,

Rival the sun in redness.

Their magic essence fills the sky,

Their auspicious light honors the sage.

Their magic essence fills the sky,

Shining through the gates of Heaven;

Their auspicious light honors the sage,

Illuminating the whole world.

Shining on mountains and rivers,

The essence frightens tigers and leopards;

Illuminating oceans and islands,

The light startles fishes and dragons.

At the side are two rows of gold – plated hooks,

At the neck are loops of whitest jade."

There is a poem that goes:

"Great are the Three Jewels, and honoured be the Way;

The Four Kinds of Life and Six Paths are all explained.

Whoever knows and teaches the law of Man and Heaven,

Can pass on the lamp of wisdom when he sees his original nature.

It protects the body and makes it a world of gold,

Leaves body and mind pure as an ice – filled jar of jade.

Ever since Buddha made his cassock

No one will ever dare to end the priesthood."

When the Tang Emperor heard these words spoken in his throne hall he was filled with joy, and he asked another question: "Monk, what is so wonderful about your nine – ringed staff?"

"This staff of mine," the Bodhisattva replied, "is: A nine – ringed iron staff inlaid with copper,

A nine – sectioned Immortal's cane to preserve eternal youth.

Held in your hand it's as light as a bone,

As you go down the mountain it brings white clouds.

The Fifth Patriarch took it through the gates of Heaven;

When Lo Bu searched for his mother he used it to smash the gates of Earth.

Untouched by the filth of mortal dust,

It gladly accompanies the godly monk as he climbs the jade mountain."

The Tang Emperor then ordered that the cassock be unfolded. On examining it from top to bottom he saw that it was indeed a fine article.

"Elder of the Great Law," he said, "I tell you truthfully that I am now propagating the good word and widely sowing seeds of blessing. At this moment many monks are assembled at the Huasheng Monastery for recitation of the surras. Among them is one monk of outstanding virtue whose Buddha－name is Xuanzang, and we wish to buy those two treasures of yours to give him. So what is your price?"

The Bodhisattva and Moksa put their hands together, intoned the name of the Buddha, and bowed down. "If he really is a virtuous monk," she said, "I shall give them to him, and I refuse to accept any money for them."

With that she turned and left.

The Emperor immediately told Xiao Yu to stop her as he rose to his feet and called out, "You told us that you wanted five thousand ounces for the cassock and two thousand for the staff, but now that we have said we shall buy them, you refuse to take any money. Are you going to say that I abused my power to seize your things? We would never dream of it. We shall pay the price you asked, and will take no refusal."

Raising her hand the Bodhisattva said, "I made a vow that I would give them free to anyone who honoured the Three Treasures, delighted in goodness, and believed in our Buddha. Now I have seen that Your Majesty is a good and virtuous respecter of our Buddhist faith, and have heard that there is a monk of virtuous conduct who preaches the Great Law, it is only right that I should offer them to him; I don't want any money for them.

I am leaving the things here. Good－bye." The Tang Emperor was very pleased with the monk's sincerity, and ordered that a large vegetarian banquet be given to thank him in the Imperial Kitchen. This the Bodhisattva refused to accept and went airily off. There is no need to describe how she returned to her hide－out in the local god's temple.

Taizong arranged for a court to be held at midday and sent Wei Zheng with a decree summoning Xuanzang to attend. He found the monastic official assembling the monks as he climbed the rostrum for the chanting of surras and gathas. The moment he heard the decree he came down from the rostrum, tidied his clothes, and went with Wei

Zheng to the imperial presence.

"Up till now we have had nothing suitable with which to thank you, Your Grace, for your efforts in acquiring merit. This morning Xiao Yu met two monks who have vowed to give you a precious brocade cassock and a nine–ringed monk's staff. We have therefore sent for you, Master, to come and receive them," said the Emperor. Xuanzang kowtowed in thanks.

"If you do not reject it, Your Grace, let us see what it looks like on you." Xuanzang shook it open, draped it across his shoulders, took the staff in his hand, and stood respectfully before the steps of the throne. The monarch and all his ministers were overjoyed. He truly was a son of the Tathagata. Look at him: Chapter 12

How elegant his imposing features;

His Buddha–vestments fit as if they had been made for him.

The glow radiating from them fills Heaven and Earth,

While the colours crystallize in the sky.

Rows of gleaming pearls above and below,

Layers of golden threads joining front and back.

A hood edged with brocade,

Embroidered with ten thousand strange designs.

Patterns of the Eight Treasures hold the threads of the buttons, While the golden collar is fastened with catches of velvet.

The Buddha–Heavens are set out in order of eminence,

While to left and right are the high and humble stars.

Great is the destiny of Xuanzang Master of the Law,

Who is worthy to accept this gift at present.

He is just like a living Arhat,

Excelling the Enlightened One of the West.

On the monkish staff the nine rings clink,

And richly glows the Vairocana miter.

How true that be is a Buddha's son;

It is no lie that he has surpassed enlightenment.

Chapter 12

183

Journey to the West

All the civil and military officials cried out with admiration, and the Emperor was delighted. Telling the Master of the Law to put the cassock on properly and take the staff, he granted him two bands of ceremonial attendants and had a host of officials see him out of the palace and walk with him to his monastery. It was just like the procession for a top graduate in the palace examination. Xuanzang bowed once more to thank the Emperor and then set out, striding majestically along the highway. All the travelling merchants, the shop −keepers, the fashionable young men, the professional scribes, the men and women, young and old, in the city of Chang'an fought to get a look at him and praise him.

"What a splendid Master of the Law," they said. "He's an Arhat come down to earth, a living Bodhisattva come to see us mortals." Xuanzang went straight to his monastery, where all the monks left their places of meditation to welcome him. When they saw the cassock he was wearing and the staff in his hand they all said that King Ksitigarbha had come, did homage to him, and stood in attendance to right and left. Ascending the main hall, Xuanzang burned incense and worshipped Buddha, and when he had given an account of the Emperor's grade they all returned to their seats for meditation. Nobody noticed that the red wheel of the sun was now sinking in the West.

As the sun sinks, plants and trees are veiled in mist

While the capital echoes to the bell and drum.

After three chimes of the bell nobody moves:

The streets throughout the city are still.

The monastery gleams with the light of its lamps;

The village is lonely and silent.

The Chan monks enter the trance and repair damaged sutras.

A good way to purify oneself of evil and nourish the true nature.

Time passed in the snap of a finger, and it was time for the special assembly on the seventh day, so Xuanzang wrote a memorial inviting the Tang Emperor to come and burn incense. His reputation for piety had now spread throughout the empire. Taizong therefore led a large number of civil and military officials and his empresses, consorts and their families to the monastery in a procession of carriages to the temple early that morning. Everyone in the city, whether young or old, humble or mighty, went to the temple to hear the preaching.

The Bodhisattva said to Moksa, "Today is a special day of the Great Mass of Land and Water, which will go on from this first seventh day to the seventh seventh day, as is proper. You and I are going to mingle with the crowds for three reasons: to see the service, to see the Golden Cicada enjoying the blessing of wearing our treasure, and to hear what branch of the scriptures he preaches on." The pair of them went to the temple. They were fated to meet their old acquaintance, just as the Wisdom returned to its own preaching place. When they went inside the monastery they saw that this great and heavenly dynasty surpassed any other in the world; Chapter 12

while the Jetavana Monastery and Sravana were no match for this temple. Sacred music sounded clear above the shouting of Buddha names. When the Bodhisattva approached the preaching dais she saw in Xuanzang the likeness of the wise Golden Cicada. As the poem goes:

Pure in every image, free of every speck of dirt,

The great Xuanzang sat on his lofty dais.

The lonely souls who have been delivered come in secret,

While the well－born arrive to hear the law.

Great is his wisdom in choosing suitable methods;

All his life he has opened the doors of the scriptures.

As they watch him preach the infinite Law,

The ears of young and old alike are filled with joy.

As Guanyin went to the temple preaching hall

She met an old acquaintance who was no common mortal.

He spoke about every current matter,

And mentioned the achievements of many a mortal era.

The clouds of the Dharma settle over every mountain,

The net of the teaching spreads right across the sky.

If one counts the number of pious thoughts among humans

They are as plentiful as raindrops on red blossom.

On his dais the Master of the Law read through the *Sutra to Give Life and Deliver the Dead,* discussed the *Heavenly Charm to Protect the Country* and preached on the *Exhortation to Cultivate Merit.* The Bodhisattva went up to the dais, hit it, and shouted out at the top of her voice, "Why are you only talking about the doctrine of the Little Vehicle, monk? Can you preach about the Great Vehicle?"

On hearing these questions a delighted Xuanzang leapt down from the preaching dais, bowed to the Bodhisattva, and said, "Venerable teacher, your disciple has sinned grievously in failing to recognize you. We monks who stand before you only preach the law of the Little Vehicle, and we know nothing of the doctrine of the Great Vehicle."

"That doctrine of the Little Vehicle of yours will never bring the dead to rebirth; it's only good enough for a vulgar sort of enlightenment. Now I have the Three Stores of the Buddha's Law of the Great Vehicle that will raise the dead up to Heaven, deliver sufferers from their

torments, and free souls from the eternal coming and going."

As the Bodhisattva was talking, the Master of Incense, an official who patrolled the temple, made an urgent report to the Tang Emperor that just when the Master of the Law was in the middle of preaching the wonderful Law a pair of scabby itinerant monks had dragged him down and were engaging him in wild argument. The Emperor ordered them to be arrested and brought before him, and a crowd of men hustled the two of them into the rear hall of the monastery.

When they saw Taizong they neither raised their hands in greeting nor bowed, but looked him in the eye and said, "What does Your Majesty want to ask us about."

Recognizing them, the Emperor asked, "Are you not the monk who gave us the cassock?"

"That's right," replied the Bodhisattva.

"If you came here to listen to the preaching you should be satisfied with getting something to eat," said Taizong. "Why did you start ranting at the Master of the Law, disturbing the scripture hall and interfering with our service to the Buddha?"

"That master of yours was only teaching the doctrine of the Little Vehicle, which will never send the dead up to Heaven," replied the Bodhisattva. "I have the Three Stores of the Buddha's Law of the Great Vehicle, which can save the dead, deliver from suffering, and ensure that the body will live for ever without coming to harm." Showing no signs of anger, Taizong earnestly asked where the Buddha's Law of the Great Vehicle was.

"It is in the Thunder Monastery in the land of India in the West, where our Buddha lives," the Bodhisattva replied, "and it can untie the knots of all injustice and save the innocent from disaster."

"Can you remember it?" the Emperor asked, and the Bodhisattva answered "Yes." Taizong then gave orders that this Master of the Law was to be taken to the dais and invited to preach.

The Bodhisattva and Moksa flew up to the dais, then soared into the sky on magic clouds. She appeared in her own form as the deliverer from suffering, holding a twig of willow in a vase, and Moksa stood beside her as Huian, holding a stick and bristling with energy. The Tang Emperor was so happy that he bowed to Heaven, while his civil and military officials all fell to their knees and burned incense.

Everyone in the temple – – monks, nuns, clerics, lay people, scholars, workmen and merchants – – all bowed down and prayed,

"Good Bodhisattva, good Bodhisattva." There is a description of her appearance: The sacred radiance shines around her,

The holy light protects her Dharma body.

Chapter 12

186

Journey to the West

In the glory of the highest Heaven

Appears a female Immortal.

The Bodhisattva

Wore on her head

Marvellous pearl tassels

With golden clasps,

Set with turquoise,

And gleaming golden.

She wore on her body

A plain blue robe with flying phoenixes,

Pale – coloured,

Patterned with running water,

On which curled golden dragons.

Before her breast hung

A moon – bright,

Wind – dancing,

Pearl – encrusted,

Jade – set circlet full of fragrance.

Around her waist was

A skirt of embroidery and brocade from the Jade Pool

Made from the silk of ice – silkworms,

With golden seams,

That rode on coloured clouds.

Before her went

A white and yellow red – beaked parrot,

To fly across the Eastern Ocean,

Chapter 12

187

Journey to the West

And all over the world

In gratitude and duty.

The vase she held gave grace and salvation,

And in the vase was a sprig of

Weeping willow to sweep away the fog,

Scattering water on the heavens,

Cleansing all evil.

Rings of jade looped over brocade buttons

And her golden – lotus feet were concealed.

She was able to visit the three heavens,

For she was Guanyin, the rescuer from suffering.

Taizong was so entranced that he forgot all about his empire; the ministers and generals were so captivated that they forgot all about

court etiquette; and the masses all intoned, "Glory be to the Bodhisattva Guanyin."

Taizong ordered that a skilled painter was to make a true likeness of the Bodhisattva, and no sooner had the words left his mouth than the brilliant and enlightened portrayer of gods and Immortals, Wu Daozi, was chosen. He was the man who later did the pictures of distinguished ministers in the Cloud—piercing Pavilion.

Wielding his miraculous brush, he painted a true likeness on the spot. The Bodhisattva's magic cloud slowly faded into the distance, and a moment later the golden light could be seen no more. All that was visible was a note drifting down from the sky on which could be read the following brief address in verse:

"Greetings to the lord of the Great Tang.

In the West are miraculous scriptures.

Although the road is sixty thousand miles long,

The Great Vehicle will offer its help.

When these scriptures are brought back to your country

They will save devils and deliver the masses.

If anyone is willing to go for them,

His reward will be a golden body."

Chapter 12

When he had read these lines Taizong issued an order to the assembly of monks: "Suspend this service until we have sent someone to fetch the scriptures of the Great Vehicle, and then you shall once more strive sincerely to achieve good retribution." The monks all obeyed his instructions. The Emperor then asked those present in the monastery, "Who is willing to accept our commission to go to the Western Heaven to visit the Buddha and fetch the scriptures?"

Before he had finished his question, the Master of the Law came forward, bowed low in greeting, and said,

"Although I am lacking in ability, I would like to offer my humble efforts to fetch the true scriptures for Your Majesty and thus ensure the eternal security of your empire." The Tang Emperor, who was overjoyed to hear this, went forward to raise him to his feet.

"Master," he said, "if you are prepared to exert your loyalty and wisdom to the full, not fearing the length of the journey or the rivers and mountains you will have to cross, I shall make you my own sworn brother."

Xuanzang kowtowed to thank him. As the Tang Emperor was indeed a man of wisdom and virtue he went to a place before the Buddha in the monastery where he bowed to Xuanzang four times, calling him "younger brother" and "holy monk." Xuanzang thanked him effusively.

"Your Majesty," he said, "I have no virtue or talent that fits me for the sacred honour of being treated as your kinsman. On this journey I shall give my all and go straight to the Western Heaven. If I fail to reach there or to obtain the true scriptures, then I shall not return to this country even in death, and shall fall for eternity into Hell." He burned incense in front of the Buddha to mark this vow. The happy Emperor ordered his chariot to take him back to the palace; later on an auspicious day would be chosen on which Xuanzang would be given a passport and set out. With that he returned and everyone dispersed.

Xuanzang went back to the Hongfu Monastery, where the many monks and his few personal disciples had already heard that he was going to fetch the scriptures. They came to ask if it was true that he had vowed to go to the Western Heaven. On being told by Xuanzang that it was indeed true, his pupils said, "Teacher, we have heard that the journey to the Western Heaven is a long one, and that there are many tigers, leopards, fiends, and demons on the way. We are afraid that you may lose you life and never come back."

"I have sworn a great vow that I shall fall into Hell for eternity if I do not get the true scriptures," replied Xuanzang. "Besides, as I have been so favored by His Majesty, I shall have to show my loyalty to the utmost if I am to repay the country for his honour. But it will be a journey into the unknown, and there is no saying what my fate will be. My pupils," he went on to say, "two or three years after I set out, or it may be as much as six or seven, that pine tree inside the monastery gate will turn to the East, which will mean that I am coming back. If it does not, you can be sure that I will not return." All his disciples committed his words most carefully to memory.

At court the next morning Taizong assembled his civil and military officials and wrote out the document Xuanzang would need to fetch the scriptures, stamping it with the imperial seal that gave the right to travel freely. When an imperial astrologer reported that this day was under an auspicious star for setting out on a long journey, the Tang Emperor was delighted. A eunuch official came in to report, "The Imperial Younger Brother, the Master of the Law, awaits a summons outside the palace doors." Calling him into the throne hall, Taizang said, "Brother, today is a lucky one for starting on a journey, and here is the pass that will let you through the checkpoints. I am also giving you a golden bowl with which you may beg for food on your journey, in addition to choosing two experienced travelers to accompany you and presenting you with a horse to carry you on your long journey. You may now set out." Xuanzang, who was very happy to hear this, thanked the Emperor and took the presents. He was now more eager than ever to be off. Taizong and a host of officials went by carriage to accompany him to the checkpoint. When they got there they found that the Chapter 12

monks of the Hongfu Monastery and Xuanzang's own disciples were waiting outside with his summer and winter clothing. As soon as he saw this the Tang Emperor ordered that it be packed and horses be provided, then told an official to pour out some wine. Raising his cup he asked, "Brother, what is your courtesy name?"

"As I am not of the world, I do not have one," replied Xuanzang. "The Bodhisattva said yesterday that there are Three Stores *(son zang)* of scriptures in the Western Heaven. You, brother, should take a courtesy name from this. What about Sanzang?"

Thanking the Emperor for his kindness, he accepted the cup of wine with the words, "Your Majesty, liquor is the first of the things from which a monk must abstain, and so I have never drunk it."

"Today's journey is exceptional," Taizong replied, "and besides, this is a nonalcoholic wine, so you should drink this cup and let us feel that we have seen you off properly." Unable to refuse any longer, Sanzang took the wine, and was on the point of drinking it when he saw Taizong bend down, take a pinch of dust in his fingers, and flick it into his cup. Seeing Sanzang's incomprehension, Taizong laughed and said,

"Dear brother, when will you return from this journey to the Western Heaven?"

"I shall be back in this country within three years," Sanzang replied. "The days and years will be long, the mountains will be high, and the road will lead you far away," said Taizong, "so you should drink this wine to show that you have more love for a pinch of dust from home than fir thousands of ounces of foreign gold."

Only then did Sanzang understand the significance of the pinch of dust, and thanking the Emperor once more he drained the cup, took his leave of him, and went out through the checkpoint. The Emperor went back to the palace.

If you don't know what happened on the journey, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 13

He Falls into the Tiger's Den and Is Saved by the Planet Venus On Double—Forked Peak Boqin Entertains the Priest

The Great Tang Emperor issued an edict

Sending Sanzang to learn the Dhyana teachings.

With firmness and patience he seeks the dragon's lair,

Determined to carry on till he climbs the Vulture Peak.

On his long journey he will visit many a country;

Thousands of cloud—capped mountains lie before him.

Now he leaves the Emperor and sets out for the West

Cleaving to the faith, and aware of the Great Void.

Chapter 13

It has been told already how Sanzang was seen off at the checkpoint outside Chang'an by the Tang Emperor and a host of officials on the twelfth day of the ninth month in the thirteenth year of *Zhen Guan.*

For two days his horse's hoofs were never still, and he soon reached the Fa Men Monastery, where the abbot came out to meet him at the head of five hundred and more monks drawn up in two lines. Taking Sanzang inside, he greeted him, offered him tea, and then gave him a monastic meal. By the time the meal was over night had fallen.

As it approached the Milky Way,

The moon was free from any dust.

The wild goose called to the distant traveler,

While washing – boards could be heard by neighbors.

Roosting birds perch in the withered trees;

The dhyana monks chant Sanskrit music.

On their seats with hassocks of rushes

They sit until the middle of the night.

In the lamplight the monks were discussing the true teachings of the Buddhist faith and the reasons for going to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures. Some said that there would be wide rivers and high mountains to cross, some that there would be many a tiger and leopard along the way, some that the lofty ranges and cliffs would be hard to cross, and some that there would be evil demons and foul fiends difficult to subdue.

Sanzang kept his lips sealed; he said nothing, only pointing to his heart and nodding occasionally.

The monks, unable to understand what he meant, put their hands together and asked, "Why do you point to your heart and nod your head, Master?"

"When the heart and mind live," Sanzang replied, "every kind of evil lives; but when they are extinguished, evil is extinguished too. I made a great vow to the Buddha in the Huasheng Monastery that if I failed to achieve this mission it would not be for lack of trying. I am determined to reach the Western Heaven, where I may see the Buddha and ask for the scriptures, so that the Wheel of the Law may revolve, and our sage Emperor enjoy eternal security."

On hearing his words the monks all expressed their admiration, saying

as if with one voice, "What a loyal and brave Hierarch." With praises still on their lips they invited the Master to go to bed and wished him a peaceful night's sleep.

Chapter 13

191

Journey to the West

Before long the bamboo clappers were sounding for the setting moon, while the cocks greeted the dawn with their crowing. The monks all got up and prepared tea and breakfast. Sanzang put on his cassock and went to worship the Buddha in the main hall.

"Your disciple Chen Sanzang," he said, "is going to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures, but my fleshly eye is too dim to see the true image of the living Buddha. I now vow that whenever I come across a temple on my journey I shall burn incense; whenever I see a Buddha's image I shall worship it; and whenever I pass a stupa I shall sweep it. My only wish is that Buddha in his mercy will soon appear to me in his golden body and give me the true scriptures to take back and propagate in the land of the East." When he had prayed he went back to the abbot's room for breakfast. After breakfast his two attendants saddled the horse and set off at a good pace. At the gate of the monastery Sanzang took his leave of the monks, who were so unwilling to be parted from him that they accompanied him for some three miles before turning back with tears in their eyes, while Sanzang carried on Westwards. It was autumn weather:

Leafless the village trees, and fallen the reed flowers;

The red leaves had dropped from maple and willow.

The way was foggy and damp, and few were the friends that he met.

Beautiful the yellow chrysanthemums,

Delicate the mountain spurs;

Sad to see the lotus withered now the water was cold.

White duckweed and red smartweed were turned to snow by the frost.

Solitary ducks coming down from the clouds, dropping from the sky,
Where pale and wispy clouds were scudding.

The swallows had departed,

The migrant geese were here,

And their honking shattered the night.

When the master and his attendants had been travelling for several days they reached the city of Gongzhou, where all the local officials were waiting to greet them and take them into the city. After a night's rest they set out again the next morning. They ate when they were hungry and drank when they were thirsty, travelling by day and stopping at night. Two or three days later they reached the garrison city of Hezhou, which was on the frontier of the Great Tang Empire. The garrison commander and the local Buddhist monks and priests had all heard that the Master of the Law, the Imperial Younger Brother, was going to the West on His Majesty's orders to see the Buddha, so they were all very respectful. The Director of Monks took him into the city, Chapter 13

provided him with all he needed, and invited him spend the night in the Fuyuan Monastery. All the monks of the monastery came to pay their respects to him, and when he had finished the meal they prepared for him he told his attendants to give the horse a good feed as they would be setting out before dawn. As soon as the cocks started to crow he called for his attendants, thus disturbing the monks, who brought him tea and food.

When he had eaten he crossed the frontier.

In his impatience Sanzang had got up too soon. As it was late autumn the cocks had crowed very early, and it was still only about two in the morning. The three of them — —four, including the horse— —covered about a dozen miles through the frost, finding their way by the light of the moon, until they saw a large mountain in front of them. They had to push the undergrowth aside as they looked for their way, and the going was indescribably rough and difficult. Just when they were wondering whether they were lost, all three of them and the horse stumbled and fell into a pit.

Sanzang was thrown into a panic, and his attendants were trembling with fear, when to add their terror they heard roars coming from further inside and loud shouts of, "Get'em! Get'em!" With a ferocious

blast of wind a crowd of fifty or sixty fiends fell upon them and dragged them out. When the shivering and shaking Master of the Law took a stealthy look he saw a thoroughly evil demon king sitting above them. Truly he was Mighty of stature,

Ferocious of face.

His eyes flashed like lightning,

His thunderous voice shook the four quarters.

Protruding, saw – edged teeth;

Bared fangs like chisels.

His body was clad in brocade,

And his back was covered with its patterns.

A beard of steel concealing his face,

Hooked claws sharp as frost:

The white – browed king of the Southern mountain,

Feared by the Yellow Lord of the Eastern Sea.

The sight of him frightened Sanzang out of his wits and made his two attendants feel their bones turn to jelly and their muscles go numb. When the demon king roared out an order to tie them up the fiends bound them with rope. He was just on the point of devouring them when a great noise was heard outside and the arrival of Mountain Lord Bear and Hermit Ox was announced. Sanzang looked up and saw that one of them was a dark fellow. Can you imagine what he looked like?

A hero of great courage,

Light and strong in body,

Powerful in crossing rivers,

Showing his awesome might as he runs through the woods.

Always blessed with lucky dreams,

He now revealed his unique valour.

He could uproot and snap a green tree,

And when he left cold he could change the weather.

Clearly he shows his miraculous powers, For which he is known as the Mountain Lord.

Behind him Sanzang saw a fat man. Do you know what he looked like?

A hat with two towering horns,

His shoulders squarely set.

He liked to wear dull－coloured clothes,

And his pace was always sluggish.

His male ancestors were called Bull;

His mother was known as Cow,

As he could work for farmers,

His name was Hermit Ox.

Chapter 13

When these two came swaggering in, the demon king rushed out to greet them. "General Yin," said Mountain Lord Bear, "I must congratulate you: you're always so successful."

"General Yin," said Hermit Ox, "my felicitations on being ever －victorious."

"How have things been with you two gentlemen recently?" asked the demon king.

"Much as usual," replied Mountain Lord.

"I get by," answered the Hermit. These preliminaries over, the three of them sat down to laugh and joke together.

Sanzang's two attendants meanwhile were howling pitifully in their bonds.

"How did those three get here?" asked the dark fellow.

"They delivered themselves to the front door," the demon king replied.

"Will you be serving them to your friends?" asked the Hermit with a smile.

"I should be honoured to," answered the demon king.

"We won't need them all," remarked the Mountain Lord. "We could eat two and keep the third." With a

"na – a – aw" of obedience the demon king told his servants to cut open the two attendants, scoop their hearts out, and chop their bodies into mince. He presented the heads, hearts, and livers to his two guests, eating the limbs himself and dividing the rest of the flesh and bones among the fiends. All that could be heard was a crunching and a munching that sounded just like tigers devouring lambs, and in a few moments it had all been eaten up. Sanzang was almost dead with fright, yet this was only his first tribulation, coming so soon after leaving Chang'an.

In his despair he noticed that the East was beginning to grow light, and when dawn broke the two monsters left, saying, "We have been handsomely entertained today, and we shall repay your hospitality in full another day." With that they both rushed out. A moment later the red sun rose high in the sky, but Sanzang was too befuddled to know where he was. Just when all seemed lost, an old man appeared, walking towards him with the help of a stick. He came up to Sanzang, broke all his bonds with a wave of his hand, and revived him by blowing into his face. Sanzang fell to his knees and bowed low to him, saying, "Thank you, venerable ancient, for saving my humble life."

The old man returned his bow and said, "Get up. Have you lost anything?"

"My attendants have been eaten by monsters, and I don't know where my baggage or my horse is," replied Sanzang.

The old man pointed with his stick and asked, "Isn't that a horse with two baggage—rolls over there?" When Sanzang turned round he saw that his things had not been lost after all, which somewhat relieved his anxiety.

"Venerable sir," he asked, "What is this place, and how did you get here?"

"This is the Double Forked Mountain, where tigers and leopards make their dens. How did you fall in here?"

"I crossed the frontier at the garrison city of Hezhou at cockcrow, not realizing that I had got up too early,"

replied Sanzang. "Just as we were making our way through frost and dew we suddenly fell into this pit. A dreadfully ferocious demon king appeared and had me and my attendants tied up. Then a dark fellow called Mountain Lord Bear and a fat one called Hermit Ox came in, and they addressed the demon king as General Yin. The three of them ate up my two attendants, and their party only ended at dawn. I cannot imagine why I should have been fated with the good fortune of you coming to rescue me, venerable sir."

"The Hermit is a wild bull spirit, the Mountain Lord is a bear spirit, and General Yin is a tiger spirit," the old man replied. "The fiends who serve him are mountain spirits, tree devils, monsters, and wolves. The reason they did not eat you was because your fundamental nature is enlightened. Come with me and I'll show you the way." Overcome with gratitude, Sanzang put the packs on his horse and led it by the bridle as he followed the old man out of the pit and on to the main road. Tying the horse to a bush beside the road, he turned round to bow low to the old man and thank him, but the old man changed into a puff of wind and rose into the sky on the back of a red-crested white crane. All that could be seen was a piece of paper drifting down in the wind with four lines of verse written on it:

"I am the Planet Venus of the Western Heaven,

Who came to save your life.

In the journey ahead you will have divine disciples:

Do not in your troubles feel angry with the scriptures."

When he had read this Sanzang worshipped Heaven and said, "Many thanks, Planet, for delivering me from this danger." This done, he continued on his difficult journey, feeling very lonely as he led his horse along. On this mountain there were

Cold rains and winds howling in the trees,

Streams splashing noisily down gullies,

Fragrant wild flowers,

Screens of rocks and boulders.

Deer and ape made raucous howls,

Roebuck and muntjac ran in herds.

Many were the songs of birds.

But there was no trace of man.

The abbot

Was trembling and uneasy;

His horse

Could barely lift its hoofs.

Sanzang did not spare himself as he pressed ahead amid the mountain peaks. He had been going for many hours without seeing any sign of a human house; he was hungry and finding the going heavy. Just at this critical moment he saw in front of him a pair of ferocious tigers roaring, while two long snakes were coiled up behind him. To his left were venomous reptiles, and to his right were terrible monsters. Being by himself and unable to think of a way out, Sanzang prepared to abandon his mind and body and let Heaven do as it would.

Besides, the horse's back was now so tired and its legs so bent that it fell to its knees on the ground and collapsed. Sanzang could not move it, either by blows or by dragging at its bridle.

The poor Master of the Law, who had nowhere to shelter, was feeling thoroughly wretched, convinced that nothing could save him from death. But when his troubles were at their worst someone came to his rescue.

Just when all seemed lost he saw the venomous reptiles and the evil monsters flee, while the tigers and the snakes hid themselves. Sanzang looked up and saw a man coming across the hillside with a steel trident in his hand and bow and arrows at his waist. Just look and see what a fine chap he was: On his head

A leopard skin hat with artemisia patterns:

On his body

A coat of woollen cloth.

Round his waist was tied a lion belt,

On his feet a pair of deerskin boots.

His eyes were as round as an evil spirit's;

His curly beard was like the evil god of the moon's.

From his waist hung a bow with poisoned arrows,

And in his hand was a steel – tipped trident.

The thunder of his voice would make a wild beast tremble,

And his ferocity terrified the pheasants.

Chapter 13

Seeing him approach, Sanzang knelt down beside the path, put his hands together, and shouted at the top of his voice, "Spare me, bandit king, spare me." The man went over to him, put down his trident, and raised him to his feet.

"Don't be frightened, venerable monk," he said, "I'm not a bad man; I'm a hunter who lives in these mountains. My name is Liu Boqin and I am known as the warden of the mountain. I came along here because I wanted a couple of animals for the pot. I never expected to meet you here— —I must have offended you."

"I am a monk sent by the Emperor of the Great Tang to visit the Buddha in the Western Heaven and ask for the scriptures," Sanzang replied. "I had just got here when I found myself completely surrounded by wolves, tigers, snakes and other creatures, which meant that I could go no further. Then suddenly you appeared, High Warden, and saved my life. Thank you very much indeed."

"Those of us who live here," replied Liu Boqin, "can only support ourselves by killing tigers and wolves, and catching snakes and other reptiles, which is why all those animals fled in terror from me. As you are from the Tang Empire, we are compatriots. This is still the territory of the Great Tang, and I am a Tang citizen. Both of us depend on the Emperor's lands and rivers for our food and drink, and we are fellow—countrymen, so there is nothing to fear. You must come with me to my hut, and your horse can rest. I'll take you on your way tomorrow." Sanzang, who was delighted to hear this, thanked him and went along behind him, leading the horse.

When they had crossed the mountainside they heard a sound like the howling of a wind. "Sit down here and don't move, venerable monk," said Boqin. "That noise like a wind means that a mountain cat is coming. Just wait a moment while I catch it, then I can take it home to feed you with." This news so terrified Sanzang that he dared not move. The high warden was striding forward, brandishing his trident, to meet the animal, when a striped tiger appeared in front of him. At the sight of Liu Boqin the animal turned to flee, but the high warden let out a thunderclap of a shout: "Where d'you think you're going, wretch?" When the tiger realized that Liu Boqin was in hot pursuit, it turned and charged him, baring its claws. The high warden raised his trident to meet his opponent. At the sight of all this Sanzang collapsed on the grass, paralyzed with fear; never had he seen anything so terrifying in all his born days. The tiger and the high warden fought a magnificent battle under the mountain:

Bursting with anger,

Mad with rage.

Bursting with anger,

The warden bristled, immensely strong.

Mad with rage,

The striped tiger snorted out red dust as it showed its might.

One bared its teeth and brandished its claws,

The other twisted and turned.

The trident thrust against the heavens and blotted out the sun;
Chapter 13

The patterned tail stirred up mist and clouds.

One made wild stabs at the chest,

The other struck at the head.

To avoid the blows was to win a new life;

A hit was an appointment with the King of Hell.

All that could be heard was the tiger bellowing

And the high warden shouting.

When the tiger bellowed,

Mountains and rivers split open, to the terror of birds and beasts.

At the high warden's shouts,

The sky was parted and the stars revealed.

The tiger's golden eyes were bulging with fury,

The hunter's valiant heart was full of wrath.

How admirable was high warden Liu of the mountain,

How splendid the lord of the beasts of the land.

As man and tiger fought for victory

Whoever weakened would lose his life.

After the pair of them had been fighting for about two hours the tiger's claws began to slacken as it grew tired, and just then the high warden smote him full in the chest with his trident. Its points pierced the animal's liver and heart, a pitiful sight. Within an instant the ground was covered with its blood as the hunter dragged it along the path by its ears. What a man! Without panting, and with his expression unchanged, he said to Sanzang, "What a piece of luck. This mountain cat will be enough! to feed you for a whole day." Sanzang was full of praise for him.

"High Warden, you really are a mountain god."

"It was nothing," said Liu Boqin, "so please don't exaggerate. This is all the result of your blessings. Come on, let's skin it and boil up some of its meat as soon as we can so as to get you fed." Holding his trident in one hand and dragging the tiger with the other he led the way, while Sanzang followed, leading his horse. As they wound their way across the mountain, a cottage suddenly came into view. In front of its gate there were: Chapter 13

Ancient trees reaching to the sky,

Wild creepers covering the path.

Cool were the wind and dust in the valleys,

Strange vapours coiled around the cliffs.

The scent of wild flowers was all along the path,

Deep, deep the green of the bamboos.

A thatched gatehouse,

A fenced yard,

Both pretty as a picture.

A stone bridge,

Whitewashed mud walls:

Charming austerity.

The loneliness of autumn,

Airy isolation.

Yellow leaves lay fallen beside the path,

White clouds drifted above the peaks.

Mountain birds sang in the woods

While a puppy barked outside the gate.

When he reached the gate, the high warden Liu Boqin threw down the tiger and shouted, "Where are you, lads?" Three or four servants of strange and repulsive appearance came out, and with much pulling and tugging they carried the tiger in. Boqin told them to skin it at once and prepare it to offer to their guest, then turned round to welcome Sanzang in. When they had formally greeted each other Sanzang bowed to Boqin to thank him for taking pity on him and saving his life.

"Why bother to thank me? We're fellow countrymen." When Sanzang had been offered a seat and served with tea, an old woman came out to greet him followed by a young one. Liu Boqin explained that they were his mother and his wife.

"Madam, please take the highest seat while I bow to you," said Sanzang.

"You are a guest from afar, venerable monk, so let us each preserve our dignity and neither bow to the other,"

the old woman replied.

"Mother," said Liu Boqin, "he has been sent by His Majesty the Tang Emperor to go to the Western Heaven to see the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. I met him on the mountain, and I thought that as we were fellow – countrymen I should invite him home to rest before I take him on his way tomorrow." The old woman was delighted.

"Good, good," she said. "But it would be even better to ask him to stay longer. Tomorrow is the anniversary of your father's passing away, and I would like to trouble the venerable monk to say some prayers and read a sutra for him; you could take him on his way the day after." Although this Boqin was a tiger-killer and the high warden of the mountain, he was a dutiful son, and when he heard this suggestion he made ready paper and incense and asked Sanzang to stay.

While they talked they had not noticed the evening drawing in. The servants set out a table and stools, then brought in several dishes of tender tiger-meat, which they placed steaming hot on the table. Liu Boqin asked Sanzang to help himself while he served the rice. Putting his hands together in front of his chest, Sanzang replied, "This is wonderful, but I must tell you frankly that I have been a monk ever since I left my mother's womb, so I am quite unable to eat meat." Boqin thought for a while before replying, "Venerable monk, our family has not eaten vegetarian food for generations. When we cut bamboo shoots, pick fungus, gather wild vegetables for drying, or make bean-curd we always cook them in the fat of roebuck, deer, tiger or leopard, so even they aren't really vegetarian; and our two cooking pots are steeped in fat, so what are we to do? I'm afraid it was wrong of me to ask you here."

"There's no need to worry," Sanzang answered. "Please go ahead and eat. I'd go without food for four or five days, or even starve, rather than break the monastic rule about vegetarian food."

"But we can't have you starving to death," protested Liu Boqin.

"Thanks to your great kindness, High Warden, I was saved from the packs of tigers and wolves. Even if I were to starve to death, it would be better than providing a meal for tigers."

Liu Boqin's mother, who had been listening to their conversation, said, "Don't talk nonsense, son. I've got some vegetarian things that we can offer to him."

"Where did you get them from?" Liu Boqin asked, to which mother replied, "Never you mind how, but I've got them." She told her daughter-in-law to take down the little cooking-pot, burn the fat out of it, scrub it and wash it several times over, then put it back on the stove. Then they half filled it with boiling water that they threw away. Next she poured boiling water on mountain-elm leaves to make tea, boiled up some millet, and cooked some dried vegetables. This was then all put into two bowls and set on the table. Then the old

woman said to Sanzang, "Please eat, venerable monk. This is completely pure tea and food that I and my daughter－in－law have prepared." Sanzang thanked them and sat down in the seat of honour. Another place was laid for Liu Boqin, where were set out bowls and dishes full of the meat of tiger, roebuck, snake, fox, and hare, as well as dried venison, all cooked without salt or sauce, which he was going to eat while Sanzang had his vegetarian meal. He had just sat down and was on the point of picking up his chopsticks when he noticed Sanzang put his hands together to recite some scripture, which so alarmed him that instead of picking up his chopsticks he stood beside him. When Sanzang had recited a few lines he urged Boqin to eat.

"Are you a short－sutra monk then?" Boqin asked.

"That wasn't a sutra, it was a grace before eating."

"You get up to all sorts of tricks. Fancy reciting sutras at mealtimes," was Boqin's comment.

When the meal was over and the dishes had been cleared away, Liu Boqin invited Sanzang out into the gathering darkness for a stroll at the back. They went along an alley and came to a thatched hut. On pushing the door open and going in Sanzang saw bows and crossbows hanging on the walls and quivers filled with arrows. From the beams were slung two gory and stinking tiger－skins, and at the foot of the wall were stood many spears, swords, tridents and clubs. In the middle were two seats. Liu Boqin urged Sanzang to sit down, but Sanzang could not bear to stay there long among the horrifying filth, and so he went outside. Going further to the back they came to a large garden full of clumps of yellow chrysanthemums and red maple －trees.

Then with a whinnying noise about a dozen plump deer and a large herd of roebuck ran out; they were docile and unfrightened on seeing humans.

"Were those roebuck and deer raised by you?" asked Sanzang.

"Yes," replied Boqin. "When you Chang'an people have some money you buy valuables, and when you have land you accumulate grain; but

we hunters can only keep a few wild animals for a rainy day." Dusk had fallen unnoticed as the two of them talked, and now they went back to the house to sleep.

Early the next morning the whole family, young and old, got up and prepared vegetarian food for the monk, and then they asked him to start reciting sutras. Sanzang washed his hands, went to the family shrine of the high warden, burned incense there, and worshipped, then beat his "wooden fish" as he recited first a prayer to purify his mouth, then a holy spell to purify his body and mind, and finally the *Sutra to Deliver the Dead.*

When he had finished, Boqin asked him to write out a letter of introduction for the dead man and also recite the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Guanyin Sutra.* Sanzang recited them in a loud, clear voice and then ate lunch, after which he read out the several chapters of the *Lotus Sutra,* the *Amitabha Sutra,* as well as one chapter of the *Peacock Sutra* and told the story of the cleansing of the bhikshu. By now it was dark, and when they had burned all kinds of incense, paper money, and paper horses for all the gods, and the letter of introduction for the dead man, the service was over and everyone went to bed and slept soundly.

The soul of Boqin's father, now delivered from being a drowned ghost, came to the house that night and appeared in a dream to everyone in the family.

"I suffered long in the underworld, unable to find deliverance," he said, "but now that the saintly monk has wiped out my sins by reading some scriptures. King Yama has had me sent back to the rich land of China to be reborn in an important family. You must reward him generously, and no half measures. Now I'm going."

Indeed:

Great is the significance of the majestic Law,

That saves the dead from suffering and the morass.

When they all awoke from their dreams, the sun had already risen in the East. Boqin's wife said, "Warden, your father came to me in a dream last night. He said that he had suffered long in the underworld, and couldn't find deliverance. Now that the saintly monk has wiped out his sins by reading some scriptures, King Yama has had him sent back to the rich land of China to be reborn in an important family. He told us to thank him generously, and no half measures. When he'd said

this he went out through the door and drifted away. He didn't answer when I called, and I couldn't make him stay. Then I woke up and realized that it was a dream."

Chapter 13

"I had a dream just like yours," replied Liu Boqin. "Let's go and tell mother about it." As they were on the point of doing this they heard his mother shout, "Come here, Boqin my son. There's something I want to tell you." The two of them went in to her to find the old woman sitting on the bed.

"My child, I had a happy dream last night. Your father came home and said that thanks to his salvation by the venerable monk, his sins have been wiped out and he has gone to be reborn in an important family in the rich land of China." Husband and wife laughed for joy and her son said, "I and my wife both had this dream, and we were just coming to tell you when you called to us. So now it turns out that you it too." They told everyone in the house to get up to thank Sanzang and get his horse loaded and ready. They all bowed to him and he said, "Many thanks, venerable monk, for recommending my father for delivery from his sufferings and for rebirth. We can never repay this debt of gratitude."

"What powers have I that you should thank me?" replied Sanzang.

Boqin told him about what the three of them had been told in their dreams, and Sanzang was happy too. Then they gave him his breakfast and an ounce of silver as an expression of their thanks, but he would not take a single penny of it, although the whole family begged and beseeched him to do so.

"If in your mercy you could escort me for the next stage of my journey I would be deeply touched," he said.

All that Boqin, his mother, and his wife could do then was to prepare some scones of coarse wheaten flour as his provisions, and make sure that Boqin escorted him a long way. Sanzang gladly accepted the food. On his mother's orders the high warden told two or three servants to bring hunting gear as they set off together along the road. They saw no end of wild mountain scenery.

When they had been travelling for some time they saw a mountain in front of them, a high and precipitous one that towered right up to the azure sky. Before long they had reached its base. The high warden climbed it as if he were walking on level ground, and when they were half – way over it he turned round, stood beside the path and said, "Venerable monk, I must ask you to take yourself on from here. I have to go back." On hearing this Sanzang tumbled out of his saddle to say, "Please, please, take me another stage, High Warden."

"You don't seem to know that this is called Double Boundary Mountain," said the high warden. The Eastern part belongs to our Great Tang, but the Western parts is Tatar territory. The tigers and wolves on that side are not subject to my control, which is why I can't cross the boundary. You mast go on by yourself. The monk was so alarmed to hear this that he waved his arms around and grabbed hold of the hunter's clothes and sleeves, weeping and refusing to let him go. When at last Sanzang was bowing repeatedly to the hunter to take his leave, a shout like thunder came from under the mountain: "My master's come, my master's come."

Sanzang stood frozen with fear at the sound of it, and Boqin had to hold him up. If you don't know who it was who shouted, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 14

The Mind – Ape Returns to Truth

The Six Bandits Disappear Without Trace

Buddha is the mind, the mind is Buddha,

Mind and Buddha have always needed things.

When you know that there are no things and no mind

Then you are a Buddha with a true mind and a Dharma body.

A Dharma – bodied Buddha has no form;

A single divine light contains the ten thousand images.

The bodiless body is the true body.

The imageless image is the real image.

It is not material, not empty, and not non－empty;

It does not come or go, nor does it return.

It is not different nor the same, it neither is nor isn't.

It can't be thrown away or caught, nor seen or heard.

The inner and outer divine light are everywhere the same;

A Buddha－kingdom can be found in a grain of sand.

A grain of sand can hold a thousand worlds;

In a single body and mind, all dharmas are the same.

For wisdom, the secret of no－mind is essential,

To be unsullied and unobstructed is to be pure of karma.

When you do no good and do no evil,

You become a Kasyapa Buddha.

The terror－stricken Liu Boqin and Sanzang then heard another shout of "My master's come."

"That must be the old monkey who lives in a stone cell under this mountain shouting," said the servants.

"Yes, yes," said the high warden.

Chapter 14

"What old monkey?" asked Sanzang, and the high warden replied, "This mountain used to be called Five Elements Mountain, and its name was only changed to Double Boundary Mountain when our Great Tang Emperor fought his Western campaign to pacify the country. I once heard an old man say that in the days when Wang Mang usurped the Han throne, Heaven sent down this mountain and

crushed a monkey under it.

This monkey doesn't mind heat or cold and neither eats nor drinks. He's guarded by a local tutelary god who gives him iron pellets when he's hungry and molten copper when he's thirsty. Although he's been there since ancient times, he hasn't died of cold or hunger. It must have been him shouting; there's nothing for you to be afraid of, venerable sir. Let's go down and have a look." Sanzang had to follow him, leading his horse down the mountain.

A mile or two later they saw that there really was a monkey poking out his head out of a stone cell, and making desperate gestures with his outstretched hands as he shouted, "Master, why didn't you come before?

Thank goodness you're here, thank goodness. If you get me out of here I guarantee that you'll reach the Western Heaven."

Do you know what the venerable monk saw when he went forward for a closer look?

A pointed mouth and sunken cheeks,

Fiery eyes with golden pupils.

His head was thick with moss,

And climbing figs grew from his ears.

By his temples grew little hair but a lot of grass,

Under his chin there was sedge instead of a beard.

Dirt between his eyebrows,

And mud on his nose

Made him an utter mess;

On his coarse fingers

And thick palms

Was filth in plenty.

He was so happy that he rolled his eyes

And made pleasant noises.

Although his tongue was nimble,

He couldn't move his body.

Chapter 14

205

Journey to the West

He was the Great Sage of five hundred years ago,

Who today could not escape the net of Heaven.

High warden Liu showed great courage in going up to him, pulling away the grass that was growing beside his temples and the sedge under his chin, and asking, "What have you got to say?"

"I've got nothing to say," the monkey replied. "You just tell that monk to come over here while I ask him a question."

"What question do you want to ask me?" said Sanzang.

"Are you the fellow sent to the Western Heaven by the Emperor of the East to fetch the scriptures?" asked the monkey.

"Yes, I am," Sanzang replied. "Why do you ask?"

"I am the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who wrecked the Heavenly Palace five hundred years ago. The Lord Buddha put me under this mountain for my criminal insubordination. Some time ago the Bodhisattva Guanyin went to the East on the Buddha's orders to find someone who could fetch the scriptures. When I asked her to save me she told me that I was to give up evil—doing, return to the Buddha's Law, and do all I could to protect the traveler when he went to the Western Paradise to worship Buddha and fetch the scriptures; she said that there'll something in it for me when that's done. Ever since then I've been waiting day and night with eager anticipation for you to come and save me, Master. I swear to protect you on your way to fetch the scriptures and to be your disciple."

Sanzang, delighted to hear this, said, "Although you now have these splendid intentions and wish to become a monk thanks to the teaching of the Bodhisattva, I've no axe or chisel, so how am I to get you out?"

"There's no need for axes or chisels. As long as you're willing to save me, I can get myself out," the monkey replied.

"I'm willing to save you," Sanzang said, "but how are you going to get out?"

"On the top of this mountain there is a detention order by the Tathagata Buddha written in letters of gold. If you climb the mountain and tear it off, I'll be straight out." Accepting his suggestion, Sanzang turned round to ask Liu Boqin if he would go up the mountain with him.

"I don't know whether he's telling the truth or not," said Boqin, at which the monkey shouted at the top of his voice, "It's true. I wouldn't dare lie about that."

So Liu Boqin told his servants to lead the horse while he helped Sanzang up the mountain. By hanging on to creepers they managed to reach the summit, where they saw a myriad beams of golden light and a thousand wisps of propitious vapour coming from a large, square rock on which was pasted a paper seal bearing the golden words *Om mani padme hum.* Sanzang went up and knelt down before the rock, then read the golden words and bowed his head to the ground a number of times.

He looked to the West and prayed, "I am the believer Chen Xuanzang sent on imperial orders to fetch the scriptures. If I am fated to have a disciple, may I be able to tear off the golden words and release the divine Chapter 14

monkey to come with me to the Vulture Peak. If I am not fated to have a disciple, and this monkey is an evil monster who has deceived me and will do me no good, then may I be unable to remove it." When he had prayed he bowed again, after which he went up and gently tore the paper seal off.

A scented wind blew in his face and carried the paper up into the sky as a voice called, "I am the Great Sage's guard. Now that his sufferings are over I am going back to see the Tathagata and hand in this seal."

The startled Sanzang, Liu Boqin, and the rest of them all bowed to Heaven, then went down the mountain to the stone cell, where they

said to the monkey, "The restriction order has been torn off, so you can come out."

The delighted monkey said, "Master, please stand well clear so that I don't give you a fright when I come out."

On hearing this Liu Boqin took Sanzang and the rest of them to the East, and when they had covered some two or three miles they heard the monkey shout, "Further, further!" So Sanzang went much further until he was off the mountain. Then there was a great noise as the mountain split open.

As they were all shaking with terror, the monkey appeared kneeling stark naked in front of Sanzang's horse and saying, "Master, I'm out." He bowed four times to Sanzang, then jumped up, addressed Liu Boqin with a respectful noise, and said, "Thank you, elder brother, for escorting my master, and thank you too for weeding the grass off my face." He then picked up the luggage and put it on the horse's back. At the sight of him the horse felt so weak and trembling that it could not stay on its feet. Because the monkey had once been the Protector of the Horses and looked after the dragon steeds of Heaven, and mortal horses were terrified at the very sight of him.

Seeing that his intentions were indeed good and that he really was now a Buddhist, Sanzang asked him what was his surname.

"My surname's Sun," replied the Monkey King.

"I'll give you a Buddhist name that I can call you by," said Sanzang.

"There's no need to trouble yourself," said the Monkey King, "I've already got one: Sun Wukong——Monkey Awakened to Emptiness."

"That's just right for our sect," exclaimed the monk. "As you look so much like a young novice, I'll give you another name and call you Brother Monkey. Is that all right?"

"Yes, yes, yes," said Sun Wukong, and from then on he was also called Brother Monkey, or Sun the Novice.

When he saw that Brother Monkey was determined to go, the high warden turned to Sanzang, chanted a noise of respect and said, "It's splendid that you have got so good a disciple, venerable sir. He'll certainly make the journey. I must now take my leave."

Sanzang bowed to him in thanks, saying, "I have brought you a long

way, and am deeply indebted to you.

When you return home please convey my respects to your venerable mother and your wife; I caused them a lot of trouble, and hope that I shall be able to come and thank them on my return." Boqin returned his bow, and with that they parted.

Brother Monkey asked Sanzang to mount the horse while he ambled ahead, stark naked, carrying the luggage on his back. Before long they were over the Double Boundary Mountain.

Suddenly a ferocious tiger rushed at them, roaring and lashing about with its tail. Sanzang on his horse was terrified. Brother Monkey, who was standing beside the path, put down the luggage and said happily, "Don't be scared, master, it's just bringing me my clothes." He pulled a needle out of his ear and shook it in the wind, turning it into an iron cudgel as thick as a bowl.

"I haven't used this little treasure in over five hundred years," he said, holding it in his hand. "Today I'm bringing it out to get myself some clothes to wear."

Just watch as he rushes at the tiger, shouting, "Where d'you think you're going, wretch?" The tiger crouched in the dust, not daring to move, as the cudgel smashed into its head.

Thousands of drops of red brain and many a pearly piece of tooth flew everywhere, so terrifying Sanzang that he fell out of the saddle, biting on his finger and crying, "Heavens, the high warden had to fight for ages before killing the striped tiger the other day, but this Sun Wukong has smashed a tiger to pull with a single blow. He really is a tough's tough."

"Sit down for a moment, master, while I strip the clothes off him to wear on the journey," said Brother Monkey as he dragged the tiger over.

"But he hasn't got any clothes," Sanzang protested.

"Don't bother yourself about it, I know how to cope." The splendid

Monkey King pulled a hair from his body, breathed some magic breath on it, and said "Change!," on which it turned into a pointed knife shaped like a cow's ear. Cutting into the skin on the tiger's belly, he took it all off in a single stroke, chopped off the head and claws, then held up the square hide to get an idea of its size.

"It's on the big side," he said, "so I could make two kilts out of it," and with these words he took his knife and cut it in two. One piece he put away, and the other he wrapped round his waist to cover the lower half of his body and tied firmly with a creeper he pulled down from beside the path.

"Let's go on, master, let's go on," he said. "The sewing can wait till we reach a house where we can borrow a needle and thread." He pinched his iron cudgel to make it as small as a needle again, put it back in his ear, took the luggage on his back, and asked Sanzang to mount the horse.

As the two of them went along the venerable monk asked from the horse's back, "Wukong, why has the iron cudgel you used to kill the tiger disappeared?"

"What you don't know, master," replied Brother Monkey with a laugh, "is that I got it from the dragon palace of the Eastern Sea, and that it's called the Magic Iron to Hold the Bed of the Milky Way in Place or

'As – You – Will Gold – Banded Cudgel'. When I raised my great rebellion against the Heavenly Palace in the old days it served me well. It can change into anything and be whatever size I want it to be. Just now I turned it into an embroidery needle and put it away in my ear. I only take it out when I need it."

Concealing his delight at hearing this, Sanzang went on to ask, "Why didn't that tiger move when it saw you?

Why on earth did it let you hit it?"

"I can tell you in all truthfulness, master, that not just tigers but even dragons have to be on their best behavior when they meet me. I know a few tricks for putting them in their place and have the power to make rivers run backwards and stir up the seas. I can tell what things are really like from appearances alone, and sort out the truth behind what is said. When I want to make myself big I measure myself against the universe, and when I shrink I can be held on a downy hair. There's no limit to the transformations I can perform, and nobody can

tell when I'm going to vanish or when I'm going to reappear. There was nothing wonderful about skinning that tiger. Wait till I show you a thing or two." This took a great load off Sanzang's mind, and he whipped his horse on. As master and disciple went along their way talking together, the sun was sinking in the West, and they saw:

In the fiery glow of the setting sun

The clouds return to ends of the sky and the sea.

The birds on a thousand mountains chirrup and call,

Flying in flocks to the woods for the night.

The wild beasts go two by two;

All species return to their dens.

A crescent moon breaks through the dusk,

As countless points of starlight shimmer.

"You must hurry up, master, as it's late," said Monkey. "There must be a house in that clump of trees over there, so let's get there as soon as possible to settle down for the night." Sanzang whipped on his horse and galloped to the house, where he dismounted.

Brother Monkey put down the luggage, went up to the gate, and shouted, "Open up, open up." An old man came out, leaning on a bamboo stick, and the gate creaked as he opened it. At the sight of Monkey's ugly face and the tiger—skin wrapped around him, which made him look like the god of thunder, the old man was so terrified that his legs turned to jelly and his body went numb.

"A devil.... A devil," he muttered deliriously.

Sanzang went up to support him, saying, "Don't be afraid, aged benefactor. He's no devil, he's my disciple."

When the old man looked up and saw Sanzang's pure face he felt steady on his feet at once, and he asked what monastery Sanzang was from, and why had he brought that evil—looking creature to his house.

"I come from the Tang Court," said Sanzang, "and I am going to the Western Heaven to visit the Buddha and ask for the scriptures. As we were passing this way at nightfall we came to your mansion, good benefactor, to ask for a night's lodging. We shall be off before dawn tomorrow. I very much hope that you will be able to help us."

"You may be a Tang man," the old fellow replied, "but that ugly brute certainly isn't."

"You've got no eyes in your head, you silly old man," shrieked Brother Monkey. "He's my master and I'm his disciple. I'm no Tang man or Spike man, I'm the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. Some of the people who live in Chapter 14

this house must know me, and I've seen you before."

"Where've you seen me?" the old man asked.

"Didn't you gather firewood in front of my face and pick wild vegetables from my cheeks when you were a child?" said Sun Wukong.

"Rubbish," retorted the old man.

"Where did you live and where did I live when I was supposed to gather firewood and wild vegetables in front of your face?"

"It's you who's talking rubbish, my child," replied Sun Wukong. "You don't know who I am, but I'm the Great Sage from the stone cell under the Double Boundary Mountain. Take another look and see if you can recognize me now." The old man at last realized who he was and said, "I suppose you do look a bit like him, but however did you get out?" Sun Wukong told him the whole story of how the Bodhisattva had converted him and told him to wait till the Tang Priest came to take off the seal and release him. The old man went down on his knees and bowed his head, inviting the Tang Priest inside and calling his wife and children to come and meet him; they were all very happy when they heard what had happened.

When they had drunk tea he asked Sun Wukong, "How old are you, Great Sage?"

"How old are you, then?" said Sun Wukong.

"In my senile way I have reached a hundred and thirty."

"Then you could be my remote descendant," said Brother Monkey. "I can't remember when I was born, but I spent over five hundred years under that mountain."

"True, true," remarked the old man, "I remember my grandfather saying that this mountain fell from heaven to crush a magical monkey, and you weren't able to get out before now. When I saw you in my childhood, grass grew on your head and there was mud on your face, so I wasn't afraid of you. But now that the mud and grass have gone you look thinner, and the tiger–skin round your waist makes you as near a devil as makes no difference."

This conversation made everyone roar with laughter, and as he was a kind old man he had a vegetarian meal set out. When the meal was over Sanzang asked him his surname.

"Chen," the old man replied. On hearing this, Sanzang raised his hands in greeting and said, "Venerable benefactor, you are of the same clan as myself."

"Master," protested Brother Monkey, "You're called Tang, aren't you, so how can you belong to the same clan as him?"

"My secular surname is Chen, and I am from Juxian Village, Hongnong Prefecture, Haizhou, in the Tang Empire. My Buddhist name is Chen Xuanzang. But as our Great Tang Emperor Taizong called me his younger brother and gave me the surname Tang, I am known as the Tang Priest." The old fellow was delighted to hear that they shared a surname.

"Chen, old fellow," said Monkey, "I'm afraid this will be putting your family out, but I haven't washed for over five hundred years, so could you go and boil up some water for me and my master to have a bath before Chapter 14

we set out again? Thank you." The old man gave instructions for water to be boiled and a tub brought, and he lit the lamp.

When master and disciple had bathed they sat down by the lamp, and Brother Monkey asked once more, "Old Chen, there's another thing I'd like to ask you: could you lend me a needle and thread?"

"Yes, of course," the old man replied, sending his wife to fetch them and then handing them to Monkey.

Monkey's sharp eyes had observed his master take off a short white cotton tunic, which he did not put on again, so Monkey grabbed it and put it on himself. Then he took off his tiger skin, joined it up with a pleat, wrapped it round his waist again, tied it with a creeper, went up to his master, and asked, "How would you say these clothes compared with what I was wearing before?"

"Splendid, splendid," replied Sanzang, "it makes you look quite like a real monk. If you don't mind cast－offs,"

he added, "you can go on wearing that tunic." Sun Wukong chanted a "na－a－aw" of obedience and thanked him, then went off to find some hay for the horse. When all the jobs were finished, master and disciple went to bed.

Early the next morning Sun Wukong woke up and asked his master to set out. Sanzang dressed and told Monkey to pack the bedding and the rest of the luggage. They were just on the point of leaving when the old man appeared. He had prepared hot water for washing as well as breakfast. After breakfast they set out, Sanzang riding the horse and Brother Monkey leading. They ate when they were hungry and drank when they were thirsty, travelling by day and resting by night. Thus they went on until they realized it was early winter.

When the frost destroys the red leaves the woods are sparse;

On the ridge only pine and cypress flourish.

The unopened plum buds exhale a dark perfume,

Warming the short days,

A touch of spring.

When the chrysanthemum and lotus is finished, the wild tea blossoms.

By the cold bridge and the ancient trees the birds quarrel for branches.

In the twisting gully the waters of the spring run low,

Pale snow clouds drift across the sky.

The North wind blows strong,

Tugging at your – sleeves:

Who can bear the cold towards evening?

Chapter 14

211

Journey to the West

When master and disciple had been travelling for a long time they heard a whistle from beside the path, and six men rushed out with spears, swords, cutlasses, and strongbows.

"Where do you think you're going, monk?" they roared. "If you give us your horse and luggage we'll spare your life." Sanzang fell from his horse, scared out of his wits and unable to utter a word. Brother Monkey helped him to his feet and said, "Don't worry, master, it's nothing serious. They're come to bring us some clothes and our travelling expenses."

"Are you deaf, Wukong?" the other asked. "They told us to give them our horse and luggage, so how can you ask them for clothes and money?"

"You look after the clothes, the luggage and the horse while I go and have a bash at them. We'll see what happens."

"A good hand is no match for two fists," said Sanzang, "and a pair of fists is no match for four hands. They are six big men against little you, all by yourself. You can't possibly have the nerve to fight them."

The brave Brother Monkey did not stop to argue. Instead he stepped forward, folded his arms across his chest, bowed to the six bandits and said, "Why are you gentlemen obstructing our way?"

"We are mighty robber kings, benevolent lords of the mountain. We have been very famous for a long time, although you don't seem to have heard of us. If you abandon your things at once, we'll let you go on your way; but if there's even a hint of a 'no' from you, we'll turn your flesh into mincemeat and your bones into powder."

"I too am a hereditary robber king, and have ruled a mountain for

many years, but I've never heard of you gentlemen."

"Since you don't know our names, I'll tell them to you: Eye – seeing Happiness, Ear – hearing Anger, Nose – smelling Love, Tongue – tasting Thought, Mind – born Desire, and Body – based Sorrow." Sun Wukong laughed at them. "You're just a bunch of small – time crooks. You can't see that I'm your lord and master although I'm a monk, and you have the effrontery to get in our way. Bring out all the jewels you've stolen, and the seven of us can share them out equally. I'll let you off with that."

This made the bandits happy, angry, loving, thoughtful, desirous, and sorrowful respectively, and they all charged him, yelling, "You've got a nerve, monk. You've got nothing to put in the kitty, but you want to share our stuff." Waving their spears and swords they rushed him, hacking wildly at his face. Seventy or eighty blows crashed down on him, but he simply stood in the middle of them, ignoring everything.

"What a monk!" the bandits said. "He's a real tough nut."

"I think we've seen enough of that," said Brother Monkey with a smile. "Your hands must be tired after all that bashing. Now it's my turn to bring out my needle for a bit of fun."

"This monk must have been an acupuncturist," said the bandits. "There's nothing wrong with us. Why is he talking about needles?"

Taking the embroidery needle from his ear, Brother Monkey shook it in the wind, at which it became an iron cudgel as thick as a ricebowl. With this in his hand he said, "Stick around while I try my cudgel out." The terrified bandits tried to flee in all directions, but Monkey raced after them, caught them all up, and killed Chapter 14

every one of them. Then he stripped the clothes off them, took their money, and went back with his face wreathed in smiles.

"Let's go, master; I've wiped those bandits out," he said.

"Even though they were highwaymen, you're really asking for trouble," Sanzang replied. "Even if they had been arrested and handed over to the authorities, they wouldn't have been sentenced to death. You may know a few tricks, but it would be better if you'd simply driven them

away. Why did you have to kill them all? Even taking a man's life by accident is enough to stop someone from becoming a monk. A person who enters the religious life

Spares the ants when he sweeps the floor,

Covers the lamps to save the moth.

What business did you have to slaughter the lot of them, without caring which of them were the guilty and which were innocent? You haven't a shred of compassion or goodness in you. This time it happened in the wilds, where nobody will be able to trace the crime. Say someone offended you in a city and you turned murderous there. Say you killed and wounded people when you went berserk with that club of yours. I myself would be involved even though I'm quite innocent."

"But if I hadn't killed them, they'd have killed you, master," protested Sun Wukong.

"I am a man of religion, and I would rather die than commit murder," said Sanzang. "If I'd died, there'd only have been me dead, but you killed six of them, which was an absolute outrage. If the case were taken to court, you couldn't talk your way out of this even if the judge were your own father."

"To tell you the truth, master, I don't know how many people I killed when I was the monster who ruled the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit," said Sun Wukong, "but if I'd acted your way I'd never have become the Great Sage Equaling Heaven."

"It was precisely because you acted with such tyrannical cruelty among mortals and committed the most desperate crimes against Heaven that you got into trouble five hundred years ago," retorted Sanzang. "But now you have entered the faith, you'll never reach the Western Heaven and never become a monk if you don't give up your taste for murder. You're too evil, too evil."

Monkey, who had never let himself be put upon, flared up at Sanzang's endless nagging.

"If you say that I'll never become a monk and won't ever reach the Western Heaven, then stop going on at me like that. I'm going back."

Before Sanzang could reply, Monkey leapt up in a fury, shouting, "I'm off." Sanzang looked up quickly, but he was already out of sight. All

that could be heard was a whistling sound coming from the East. Left on his own, the Priest nodded and sighed to himself with great sadness and indignation.

"The incorrigible wretch," he reflected. "Fancy disappearing and going back home like that just because I gave him a bit of a telling – off. So that's that. I must be fated to have no disciples or followers. I couldn't find Chapter 14

him now even if I wanted to, and he wouldn't answer if I called him. I must be on my way." So he had to strive with all his might to reach the West, looking after himself with nobody to help.

Sanzang had no choice but to gather up the luggage and tie it on the horse. He did not ride now. Instead, holding his monastic staff in one hand and leading the horse by the reins with the other, he made his lonely way to the West. Before he had been travelling for long he saw an old woman on the mountain path in front of him. She was holding an embroidered robe, and a patterned hat was resting upon it. As she came towards him he hurriedly pulled the horse to the side of the path to make room for her to pass.

"Where are you from, venerable monk," the old woman asked, "travelling all alone and by yourself?"

"I have been sent by the great King of the East to go to the West to visit the Buddha and ask him for the True Scriptures," he replied.

"The Buddha of the West lives in the Great Thunder Monastery in the land of India, thirty – six thousand miles away from here. You'll never get there, just you and your horse, without a companion or disciple."

"I did have a disciple, but his nature was so evil that he would not accept a little reproof I administered to him and disappeared into the blue," said Sanzang.

"I have here an embroidered tunic and a hat inset with golden patterns that used to be my son's," the woman said, "but he died after being a monk for only three days. I've just been to his monastery to mourn him and say farewell to his master, and I was taking this tunic and this hat home to remember the boy by. But as you have a disciple, venerable monk, I'll give them to you."

"Thank you very much for your great generosity, but as my disciple has already gone, I couldn't accept them."

"Where has he gone?"

"All I heard was a whistling sound as he went back to the East."

"My home isn't far to the East from here," she said, "so I expect he's gone there. I've also got a spell called *True Words to Calm the Mind,* or the Band–tightening Spell. You must learn it in secret, and be sure to keep it to yourself. Never leak it to anyone. I'll go and catch up with him and send him back to you, and you can give him that tunic and hat to wear. If he's disobedient again, all you have to do is recite the spell quietly. That will stop him committing any more murders or running away again."

Sanzang bowed low to thank her, at which she changed into a beam of golden light and returned to the East.

He realized in his heart that it must have been the Bodhisattva Guanyin who had given him the spell, so he took a pinch of earth as if he were burning incense and bowed in worship to the East most reverently. Then he put the tunic and hat in his pack, sat down beside the path, and recited the *True Words to Calm the Mind* over and over again until he knew them thoroughly, and had committed them to his memory.

Let us turn to Sun Wukong, who after leaving his master went straight back to the Eastern Ocean on his somersault cloud. Putting his cloud away, he parted the waters and went straight to the undersea palace of crystal. His approach had alarmed the dragon king, who came out to welcome him and took him into the palace, where they sat down.

When they had exchanged courtesies the dragon king said, "I'm sorry that I failed to come and congratulate you on the end of your sufferings, Great Sage. I take it that you are returning to your old cave to put your immortal mountain back in order."

"That's what I wanted to do," Monkey replied. "But I've become a monk instead."

"A monk? How?" the dragon king asked.

"The Bodhisattva of the Southern Sea converted me. She taught me to work for a good reward later by going to the West with the Tang Priest from the East, visiting the Buddha, and becoming a monk. And my name has been changed to Brother Monkey."

"Congratulations, congratulations," said the dragon king. "You've turned over a new leaf and decided to be good. But in that case why have you come back to the East instead of going West?" Monkey laughed.

"Because that Tang Priest doesn't understand human nature. He started nagging away at me about a few small—time highwaymen I killed, and said that everything about me was wrong. You know how I can't stand people going on at me, so I left him to come home to my mountain. I looked in on you first to ask for a cup of tea."

"Delighted to oblige," said the dragon king, and his dragon sons and grandsons came in with some fragrant tea which they presented to Monkey.

When he had drunk his tea, Monkey looked round and saw a picture called, "Presenting the Shoe at the Yi Bridge" hanging on the wall behind him.

"What's that a view of?" asked Monkey.

"You wouldn't know about it because it happened after your time," the dragon king replied. "It's called

'Presenting the Shoe Three Times at the Yi Bridge.'"

"What's all that about?" Monkey asked.

"The Immortal is Lord Yellow Stone, and the boy is Zhang Liang, who lived in Han times," the dragon king replied. "Lord Yellow Stone was sitting on the bridge when suddenly he dropped one of his shoes under it and told Zhang Liang to fetch it for him. The boy Zhang Liang did so at once, and knelt down to present it to him.

Lord Yellow Stone did this three times, and because Zhang Liang never showed a trace of arrogance or disrespect, Lord Yellow Stone was touched by his diligence. One night he gave Zhang Liang some heavenly books and told him to support the Han cause. Later he won victories hundreds of miles away through his calculations within the

walls of his tent. When peace came he resigned his office and went back to roam on his mountain with Master Red Pine and achieve the Way of Immortality through enlightenment. Great Sage, if you don't protect the Tang Priest with all your might, and if you reject his instruction, then you might as well stop trying to win yourself a good later reward, because it will mean you're only an evil Immoral after all."

Monkey hummed and hawed, but said nothing.

"Great Sage," said the dragon king, "you must make your mind up. Don't ruin your future for the sake of any easy life now."

"Enough said. I'll go back and look after him," replied Sun Wukong. The dragon king was delighted.

"In that case I shan't keep you. I ask you in your mercy not to leave your master waiting for long." Being thus pressed to go, Monkey left the sea palace, mounted his cloud, and took leave of the dragon king.

On his way he met the Bodhisattva Guanyin. "What are you doing here, Sun Wukong?" she asked. "Why did you reject the Tang Priest's teaching and stop protecting him?" Brother Monkey frantically bowed to her from Chapter 14

his cloud and replied, "As you had predicted, Bodhisattva, a monk came from the Tang Empire who took off the seal, rescued me, and made me his disciple. I ran away from him because he thought I was wicked and incorrigible, but now I'm going back to protect him."

"Hurry up then, and don't have any more wicked thoughts." With that they each went their separate ways.

A moment later Monkey saw the Tang Priest sitting gloomily beside the path. He went up to him and said,

"Why aren't you travelling, master? What are you still here for?" Sanzang looked up.

"Where have you been?" he asked. "I couldn't move without you, so I had to sit here and wait till you came back."

"I went to visit the Old Dragon King of the Eastern Sea to ask him for some tea," Monkey replied.

"Disciple, a religious man shouldn't tell lies. How can you say that you went to drink tea at the dragon king's place when you haven't been gone two hours?"

"I can tell you quite truthfully," replied Monkey with a smile, "that with my somersault cloud I can cover thirty—six thousand miles in a single bound. That's how I got there and back."

"When I spoke to you a little severely you resented it and went off in a huff," said Sanzang. "It was all right for a clever person like you—
—you begged yourself some tea. But I couldn't go, and had to stay here hungry.

You ought to be sorry for me."

"If you're hungry, master, I'll go and beg you some food," suggested Monkey.

"No need," his master replied, "there are still some dry provisions in my bundle that the high warden's mother gave me. Take that bowl and fetch some water. When we've eaten some of it we can be on our way."

Opening the bundle, Brother Monkey found some scones made of coarse flour, which he took out and gave to his master. He also noticed the dazzling brocade tunic and the hat with inlaid golden patterns.

"Did you bring this tunic and hat with you from the East?" he asked. Sanzang had to make something up on the spot.

"I used to wear them when I was young. With that hat on you can recite scriptures without ever having been taught them, and if you wear that tunic you can perform the rituals without any practice."

"Dear master, please let me wear them," Monkey pleaded.

"I don't know whether they'll fit you, but if you can get them on, you can wear them." Monkey took off the old white tunic, put the brocade one on instead, and found that it was a perfect fit. Then he put the hat on his head.

As soon as he had the hat on, Sanzang stopped eating and silently

recited the Band – tightening Spell.

"My head aches, my head aches," cried Brother Monkey, but his master went on and recited the spell several times more. Monkey, now rolling in agony, tore the hat to shreds, and Sanzang stopped reciting the spell for fear he would break the golden band. The moment the spell stopped the pain finished. Reaching up to feel his head, Monkey found something like a golden wire clamped so tightly around it that he could not wrench or snap it off. It had already taken root there. He took the needle out of his ear, forced it inside the band, and pulled wildly at it. Sanzang, again frightened that he would snap it, started to recite the spell once more. The pain was so bad this time that Monkey stood on his head, turned somersaults, and went red in the face and

ears. His eyes were popping and his body went numb. Seeing the state he was in, Sanzang had to stop, and the pain stopped again too.

"Master," said Monkey, "What a curse you put on me to give me a headache like that."

"I didn't put a curse on you, I recited the Band – tightening Spell," Sanzang replied.

"Say it again and see what happens," said Monkey, and when Sanzang did as he asked, Monkey's head ached again. "Stop, stop," he shouted, "the moment you started reciting it my head ached. Why did you do it?"

"Will you accept my instruction now?" Sanzang asked.

"Yes," Monkey replied.

"Will you misbehave again in future?"

"I certainly won't," said Monkey.

Although he had made this verbal promise, he was still nurturing evil thoughts, and he shook his needle in the wind till it was as thick as a ricebowl. He turned on the Tang Priest, and was on the point of finishing him off when the terrified Sanzang recited the spell two or three more times.

The monkey dropped his cudgel and fell to the ground, unable to raise his arm, "Master," he shouted, "I've seen the light. Stop saying the spell, please stop."

"How could you have the perfidy to try to kill me?" asked Sanzang.

"I'd never have dared," said Brother Monkey, adding, "who taught you that spell, master?"

"An old lady I met just now," replied Sanzang. Monkey exploded with rage.

"Tell me no more," he said, "I'm sure and certain the old woman was that Guanyin. How could she do this to me? Just you wait. I'm going to the Southern Sea to kill her."

"As she taught me this spell," Sanzang replied, "she's bound to know it herself. If you go after her and she recites it, that will be the end of you." Seeing the force of his argument, Monkey changed his mind and gave up the idea of going. He knelt down and pleaded pitifully, "Master, she's used this to force me to go with you to the West. I shan't go to make trouble for her, and you must recite scriptures instead of saying that spell all the time. I promise to protect you, and I shall always be true to this vow."

"In that case you'd better help me back on the horse," Sanzang replied. Monkey, who had been plunged into despair, summoned up his spirits, tightened the belt round his brocade tunic, got the horse ready, gathered up the luggage, and hurried off towards the West. If you want to know what other stories there are about the journey, then listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 15

On the Coiled Snake Mountain the Gods Give Secret Help

In the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge the Thought－Horse Is Reined in

Monkey looked after the Tang Priest as they headed West. They had been travelling for several days in the twelfth month of the year, with

its freezing North winds and biting cold. Their path wound along overhanging precipices and steep cliffs, and they crossed range after range of dangerous mountains. One day Sanzang heard the sound of water as he rode along, and he turned around to shout, "Monkey, where's that sound of water coming from?"

"As I remember, this place is called Eagle's Sorrow Gorge in the Coiled Snake Mountain. It must be the water in the gorge." Before he had finished speaking, the horse reached the edge of the gorge. Sanzang reined in and looked. He saw:

A thin cold stream piercing the clouds,

Deep, clear waves shining red in the sun.

The sound shakes the night rain and is heard in the quiet valley, Its color throws up a morning haze that obscures the sky.

A thousand fathoms of flying waves spit jade;

The torrent's roar howls in the fresh wind.

The current leads to the misty waves of the sea;

The egret and the cormorant never meet by a fisherman.

As master and disciple watched they heard a noise in the gorge as a dragon emerged from the waves, leapt up the cliff, and grabbed at Sanzang. In his alarm Monkey dropped the luggage, lifted Sanzang off his horse, turned, and fled. The dragon, unable to catch him up, swallowed the white horse, saddle and all, at a single gulp, then disappeared once more beneath the surface of the water. Monkey made his master sit down on a high peak and went back to fetch the horse and the luggage. When he found that the horse had gone and only the luggage was left, he carried the luggage up to his master and put it down before him.

"Master," he said, "that damned dragon has disappeared without a trace. It gave our horse such a fright that it ran away."

"However are we going to find the horse, disciple?"

"Don't worry, don't worry, wait here while I go and look for it."

He leapt into the sky, whistling. Putting up his hand to shade his fiery eyes with their golden pupils, he looked all around below him, but

saw no sign of the horse. He put his cloud away and reported, "Master, that horse of ours must have been eaten by the dragon— —I can't see it anywhere."

"Disciple," Sanzang protested, "how could that wretched creature have a mouth big enough to swallow a horse that size, saddle and all? I think the horse must have slipped its bridle in a panic and run into that valley. Go and have a more careful look."

"You don't know about my powers," Monkey replied. "These eyes of mine can see what's happening three hundred miles away, and within that range I can even spot a dragonfly spreading its wings. There's no way I could miss a big horse like that."

"But we'll never get across those thousands of mountains and rivers." As he spoke, his tears fell like rain. The sight of him crying was too much for Brother Monkey, who flared up and shouted, "Stop being such an imbecile, master. Sit there and wait while I find that wretch and make him give us back our horse."

"You mustn't go," said Sanzang, grabbing hold of him. "I'm frightened that he'll come creeping out again and kill me this time. Then I'll be dead as well as the horse, and that would be terrible."

This made Monkey angrier than ever, and he roared with a shout like thunder, "You're hopeless, absolutely hopeless. You want a horse to ride but you won't let me go. This way you'll be sitting there looking at the luggage for the rest of your life."

As he was yelling ferociously in a flaming temper, a voice was heard in the sky that said, "Don't be angry, Great Sage; stop crying, younger brother of the Tang Emperor. We are gods sent by the Bodhisattva Guanyin to give hidden protection to the pilgrim who is fetching the scriptures."

At these words Sanzang immediately bowed, but Monkey said, "Tell me your names, you lot."

"We are the Six Dings, the Six Jias, the Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions, the Four Duty Gods, and the Eighteen Protectors of the

Faith; we shall take it in turns to be in attendance every day."

"Who starts today?"

"The Dings and Jias, the Four Duty Gods, and the Protectors of the Faith will take turns. Of the Revealers of the Five Regions, the Gold −headed Revealer will always be with you by day and by night."

"Very well then," said Monkey, "all those of you who are not on duty may withdraw. The Six Ding Heavenly Generals, the Duty God of the Day, and the Revealers of the Truth will stay here to protect my master, while I shall go to find that evil dragon in the gorge and make him give our horse back." The gods all did as they were told, and Sanzang, now greatly relieved, sat on the cliff and gave Monkey detailed instructions.

"There's no need for you to worry," said the splendid Monkey King as he tightened the belt round his brocade tunic, folded up his tiger −skin kilt, grasped his cudgel, went to the edge of the gorge, and stood amid clouds and mist above the water. "Give us back our horse, mud loach, give us back our horse," he shouted.

Now when the dragon had eaten Sanzang's white horse it lay low in the stream, hiding its miraculous powers and nourishing its vital nature. When it heard someone shouting and cursing it and demanding the horse back, it was unable to hold back its temper.

Leaping up through the waves it asked, "How dare you make so free with your insults?"

The moment he saw it, Monkey roared, "Don't go! Give us back our horse!" and swung his cudgel at the dragon's head. Baring its fangs and waving its claws, the dragon went for him. It was a noble battle that the pair of them fought beside the ravine.

The dragon stretched its sharp claws,

The monkey raised his gold−banded cudgel.

The beard of one hung in threads of white jade,

The other's eyes flashed like golden lamps.

The pearls in the dragon's beard gave off a coloured mist,

The iron club in the other's hands danced like a whirlwind.

One was a wicked son who had wronged his parents;

The father, the evil spirit who had worsted heavenly generals.

Both had been through trouble and suffering,

And now they were to use their abilities to win merit.

Coming and going, fighting and resting, wheeling and turning, they battled on for a very long time until the dragon's strength was exhausted and his muscles numb. Unable to resist any longer, it turned around, dived into the water, and lay low at the bottom of the stream. It pretended to be deaf as the Monkey King cursed and railed at it, and did not emerge again.

Monkey could do nothing, so he had to report to Sanzang, "Master, I swore at that ogre till it came out, and after fighting me for ages it fled in terror. It's now in the water and won't come out again."

"Are you sure that it really ate our horse?" Sanzang asked.

"What a thing to say," said Monkey, "If it hadn't eaten the horse, it wouldn't have dared to say a word or fight against me."

"When you killed that tiger the other day you said you had ways of making dragons and tigers submit to you, so how comes it that you couldn't beat this one today?" Monkey had never been able to stand provocation, so when Sanzang mocked him this time he showed something of his divine might.

"Say no more, say no more. I'll have another go at it and then we'll see who comes out on top."

The Monkey King leapt to the edge of the ravine, and used a magical way of throwing rivers and seas into turmoil to make the clear waters at the bottom of the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge as turbulent as the waves of the Yellow River in spate. The evil dragon's peace was disturbed as he lurked in the depths of the waters, and he thought, "How true it is that blessings never come in pairs and troubles never come singly. Although I've been accepting my fate here for less than a year since I

escaped the death penalty for breaking the laws of Heaven, I would have to run into this murderous devil."

The more he thought about it, the angrier he felt, and unable to bear the humiliation a moment longer he jumped out of the stream cursing, "Where are you from, you bloody devil, coming here to push me around?"

"Never you mind where I'm from," Monkey replied. "I'll only spare your life if you give back that horse."

"That horse of yours is in my stomach, and I can't sick it up again, can I? I'm not giving it back, so what about it?"

"If you won't give it back, then take this! I'm only killing you to make you pay for the horse's life." The two of them began another bitter struggle under the mountain, and before many rounds were up the little dragon could hold out no longer. With a shake of his body he turned himself into a water–snake and slithered into the undergrowth.

The Monkey King chased it with his cudgel in his hands, but when he pushed the grass aside to find the snake the three gods inside his body exploded, and smoke poured from his seven orifices. He uttered the magic word *om,* thus calling out the local tutelary god and the god of the mountain, who both knelt before him and reported their arrival.

"Put out your ankles," Monkey said, "while I give you five strokes each of my cudgel to work off my temper."

The two gods kowtowed and pleaded pitifully, "We beg the Great Sage to allow us petty gods to report."

"What have you got to say?" Monkey asked.

"We didn't know when you emerged after your long sufferings, Great Sage," they said, "which is why we didn't come to meet you. We beg to be forgiven."

"In that case," Monkey said, "I won't beat you, but I'll ask you this

instead: where does that devil dragon in the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge come from, and why did he grab my master's white horse and eat it?"

"Great Sage, you never had a master," said the two gods, "and you were a supreme Immortal with an undisturbed essence who would not submit to Heaven or Earth, so how does this master's horse come in?"

"You two don't know that either," Monkey replied. "Because of that business of offending against Heaven, I had to suffer for five hundred years. Now I've been converted by the Bodhisattva Guanyin, and she's sent a priest who's come from the Tang Empire to rescue me. She told me to become his disciple and go to the Western Heaven to visit the Buddha and ask for the scriptures. As we were passing this way we lost my master's white horse."

"Ah, so that's what's happening," the gods said. "There never used to be any evil creatures in the stream, which ran wide and deep with water so pure that crows and magpies never dared to fly across it. This was because they would mistake their own reflections in it for other birds of their own kind and often go plummeting into the water. That's why it's called Eagle's Sorrow Gorge. Last year, when the Bodhisattva Guanyin was on her way to find a man to fetch the scriptures, she rescued a jade dragon and sent it to wait here for the pilgrim without getting up to any trouble. But when it's hungry it comes up on the bank to catch a few birds or a roedeer to eat. We can't imagine how it could be so ignorant as to clash with the Great Sage."

"The first time he and I crossed swords we whirled around for a few rounds," Brother Monkey replied. "The second time I swore at him but he wouldn't come out, so I stirred up his stream with a spell to throw rivers and seas into turmoil, after which he came out and wanted to have another go at me. He didn't realize how heavy my cudgel was, and he couldn't parry it, so he changed himself into a water snake and slithered into the undergrowth. I chased him and searched for him, but he's vanished without a trace."

"Great Sage, you may not be aware that there are thousands of interconnected tunnels in this ravine, which is why the waters here run so deep. There is also a tunnel entrance round here that he could have slipped into.

There's no need for you to be angry, Great Sage, or to search for it. If you want to catch the creature, all you have to do is to ask Guanyin to come here, and it will naturally submit."

On receiving this suggestion Monkey told the local deity and the mountain god to come with him to see Sanzang and tell him all about what had happened previously. "If you go to ask the Bodhisattva to come here, when will you ever be back?" he asked, adding, "I'm terribly cold and hungry."

Before the words were out of his mouth they heard the voice of the Gold-headed Revealer shouting from the sky, "Great Sage, there's no need for you to move. I'll go and ask the Bodhisattva to come here." Monkey, who was delighted, replied, "This is putting you to great trouble, but please be as quick as you can." The Revealer then shot off on his cloud to the Southern Sea. Monkey told the mountain god and the local deity to protect his master, and sent the Duty God of the Day to find some vegetarian food, while he himself patrolled the edge of the ravine.

The moment the Gold-headed Revealer mounted his cloud he reached the Southern Sea. Putting away his propitious glow, he went straight to the Purple Bamboo Grove on the island of Potaraka, where he asked the Golden Armour Devas and Moksa to get him an audience with the Bodhisattva.

"What have you come for?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"The Tang Priest," the Revealer replied, "has lost his horse in the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge, and the Great Sage Sun Wukong is desperate, because they can neither go forward nor back. When the Great Sage asked the local deity he was told that the evil dragon you sent to the ravine, Bodhisattva, had swallowed it, so he has sent me to ask you to subdue this dragon and make it give back the horse."

"That wretched creature was the son of Ao Run, the Dragon King of the Western Sea, whom his father reported for disobedience when he burned the palace jewels. The heavenly court condemned him to death for it, but I went myself to see the Jade Emperor and asked him to send the dragon down to serve the Tang Priest as a beast of burden. Whatever made it actually eat the Tang Priest's horse? I'd better go and look into it." The Bodhisattva descended from her lotus throne, left her magic cave, and crossed the Southern Sea, travelling on propitious light with the Revealer. There is a poem about it that goes:

Honey is in the Buddha's words that fill Three Stores of scripture, The Bodhisattva's goodness is longer than the Great Wall.

The wonderful words of the Mahayana fill Heaven and Earth,

The truth of the prajna rescues ghosts and souls.

It even made the Golden Cicada shed his cocoon once more,

And ordered Xuanzang to continue cultivating his conduct.

Because the road was difficult at the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge,

The dragon's son returned to the truth and changed into a horse.

Chapter 15

222

Journey to the West

The Bodhisattva and the Revealer reached the Coiled Snake Mountain before long, and stopping their cloud in mid–air they looked down and saw Brother Monkey cursing and shouting at the edge of the ravine. When the Bodhisattva told him to call Monkey over, the Revealer brought his cloud to land at the edge of the ravine.

Instead of going to see Sanzang first, he said to Monkey, "The Bodhisattva's here."

Monkey leapt straight into the air on his cloud and shouted at her at the top of his voice, "Teacher of the Seven Buddhas, merciful head of our religion, why did you think up this way of hurting me?"

"I'll get you, you outrageous baboon, you red–bottomed ape," she replied. "I was at my wit's end two or three times over how to fetch that pilgrim, and I told him to save your life. But far from coming to thank me for saving you, you now have the effrontery to bawl at me."

"You've been very good to me, I must say," retorted Monkey. "If you'd let me out to roam around enjoying myself as I pleased, that would have been fine. I was all right when you met me above the sea the other day, spoke a few unkind words, and told me to do all I could to help the Tang Priest. But why did you give him that hat he tricked me into wearing to torture me with? Why did you make this band grow into my head? Why did you teach him that Band–tightening Spell? Why did you make that old monk recite it over and over again so that

my head ached and ached? You must be wanting to do me in." The Bodhisattva smiled.

"You monkey. You don't obey the commands of the faith, and you won't accept the true reward, so if you weren't under control like this you might rebel against Heaven again or get up to any kind of evil. If you got yourself into trouble as you did before, who would look after you? Without this monstrous head, you'd never be willing to enter our Yogacatin faith."

"Very well then," Monkey replied, "let's call this object my monstrous head. But why did you send that criminal and evil dragon to become a monster here and eat my master's horse? Letting evil creatures out to run amuck like that is a bad deed."

"I personally asked the Jade Emperor to put the dragon here as a mount for the pilgrim," said the Bodhisattva.

"Do you think an ordinary horse would be able to cross the thousands of mountains and rivers to reach the Buddha—land on the Vulture Peak? Only a dragon horse will be able to do it."

"But he's so afraid of me that he's skulking down there and won't come out, so what's to be done?" Monkey asked.

The Bodhisattva told the Revealer to go to the edge of the ravine and shout, "Come out, Prince Jade Dragon, son of the Dragon King Ao Run, to see the Bodhisattva of the Southern Sea," after which the offspring would emerge. The Revealer went to the edge of the gorge and shouted this twice, immediately the young dragon leapt up through the waves, took human form, stepped on a cloud, and greeted the Bodhisattva in mid—air.

"In my gratitude to you, Bodhisattva, for saving my life, I have been waiting here for a long time, but I have had no news yet of the pilgrim who is going to fetch the scriptures." The Bodhisattva pointed to Brother Monkey and said, "Isn't he the pilgrim's great disciple?"

"He's my enemy," the young dragon replied when he looked at him. "I ate his horse yesterday because I was starving, so he used some powers of his to fight me till I returned exhausted and terrified, then swore at me so that I had to shut myself in, too frightened to come out. He never said a word about anyone fetching scriptures."

"You never asked me my name, so how could I have told you?" Monkey retorted.

"I asked you 'Where are you from, you bloody devil?' and you yelled, 'Never mind where I'm from, and give me back that horse.' You never so much as breathed the word 'Tang.'"

"You monkey, you are so proud of your own strength that you never have a good word for anyone else," said the Bodhisattva.

"There will be others who join you later on your journey, and when they ask you any questions, the first thing you must mention is fetching the scriptures. If you do that, you'll have their help without any trouble at all."

Monkey was happy to accept instruction from her. The Bodhisattva then went forward, broke off some of the pearls from the dragon's head, soaked the end of her willow twig in the sweet dew in her bottle, sprinkled it on the dragon's body, and breathed on it with magic breath, shouted, and the dragon turned into the exact likeness of the original horse.

"You must concentrate on wiping out your past sins," she told him, "and when you have succeeded, you will rise above ordinary dragons and be given back your golden body as a reward." The young dragon took the bit between his teeth, and her words to heart. The Bodhisattva told Sun Wukong to take him to see Sanzang as she was returning to the Southern Sea. Monkey clung to her, refusing to let her go.

"I'm not going," he said, "I'm not going. If the journey to the West is as tough as this, I can't possibly keep this mortal priest safe, and if there are many such more trials and tribulations, I'll have enough trouble keeping alive myself. How can I ever achieve any reward? I'm not going, I'm not going."

"In the old days, before you had learned to be a human being," the Bodhisattva replied, "you were prepared to work for your awakening with all your power. But now that you have been delivered from a Heaven–sent calamity, you have grown lazy. What's the matter with you? In our faith, to achieve nirvana you must believe in good rewards. If you meet with injury or suffering in future, you have only to call on Heaven and Earth for them to respond; and if you get into a

really hopeless situation I shall come to rescue you myself. Come over here as I have another power to give you."

The Bodhisattva plucked three leaves from her willow twig, put them on the back of Brother Monkey's head, and shouted "Change," on which they turned into three life–saving hairs. "When the time comes and nobody else will help you," she said, "they will turn into whatever is needed to save you from disaster."

After hearing all these fine words, Monkey finally took his leave of the All–merciful Bodhisattva, who went back to Potaraka amidst scented breezes and coloured mists.

Monkey brought his cloud down to land, and led the dragon horse by the mane to see Sanzang. "Master," he said, "we've got our horse." Sanzang cheered up the moment he saw it.

"Why is it sturdier than it was before?" he asked. "Where did you find it?"

"Master, you must have been dreaming. The Golden–headed Revealer asked the Bodhisattva to come here, and she turned the dragon in the gorge into our white horse. The coloring is the same, but it hasn't got a saddle or a bridle, which is why I had to drag it here." Sanzang was astounded.

"Where's the Bodhisattva? I must go and worship her," he said.

"She's back in the Southern Sea by now, so don't bother," Monkey replied. Sanzang took a pinch of earth as if he were burning incense, knelt down, and bowed to the South. When he had finished he got up and helped Monkey put their things together for the journey. Monkey dismissed the mountain god and the local deity, Chapter 15

gave orders to the Revealer and the Duty Gods, and invited his master to mount the horse.

"I couldn't possibly ride it– –it's got no saddle or bridle," his master replied, "but we can sort this out when we've found a boat to ferry us across the stream."

"Master, you seem to have no common sense at all. Where will a boat

be found in these wild mountains? This horse has lived here for a long time and is bound to know about the currents, so you can ride him and use him as your boat." Sanzang had no choice but to do as Monkey suggested and ride the horse bareback to the edge of the stream while Monkey carried the luggage.

An aged fisherman appeared upstream, punting a raft along with the current. As soon as he saw him, Monkey waved his hand and shouted, "Come here, fisherman, come here. We're from the East, and we're going to fetch the scriptures. My master is having some trouble crossing the river, so come and ferry him over."

The fisherman punted towards them with all speed, while Monkey asked Sanzang to dismount and helped him on board the raft. Then he led the horse on and loaded the luggage, after which the fisherman pushed off and started punting with the speed of an arrow. Before they realized it they had crossed the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge and were on the Western bank.

When Sanzang told Brother Monkey to open the bundle and find a few Great Tang coins and notes to give the fisherman, the old man pushed his raft off from the shore with the words, "I don't want your money, I don't want your money," and drifted off into mid-stream. Sanzang was most upset, but could do nothing except put his hands together and thank him.

"There's no need to thank him, master," Monkey said. "Can't you see who he is? He's the water god of this stream, and I should be giving him a beating for not coming to welcome me. He should consider himself lucky to get off the beating— —how could he possibly expect money too?" His master, who was only half-convinced, mounted the saddleless horse once more and followed Monkey to join the main path, and then they hurried on towards the West. Indeed:

The great truth landed on the opposite bank,

The sincere heart and complete nature climbed Vulture Peak.

As disciple and master went forward together, the sun slipped down in the West and evening drew in.

Pale and ragged clouds,

The moon dim over the mountains,

As the cold frost fills the heavens,

And the wind's howl cuts through the body.

With the lone bird gone, the grey island seems vast;

Where the sunset glows, the distant mountains are low.

In the sparse forests a thousand trees moan,

On the deserted peak a lonely ape screams.

The path is long, and bears no footprints,

As the boat sails thousands of miles into the night.

As Sanzang was gazing into the distance from the back of his horse, he noticed a farm–house beside the path.

"Monkey," he said, "let's spend the night in the house ahead of us and go on in the morning."

Monkey looked up and replied, "Master, it's not a farm–house."

"Why not?"

"A farm–house wouldn't have all those decorative fishes and animals on the roof. It must be a temple or a nunnery."

As they were talking they reached the gate, and when Sanzang dismounted he saw the words TEMPLE OF

THE WARD ALTAR written large above the gate and went inside.

Here an old man with a rosary of pearls hanging round his neck came out to meet them with his hands held together and the words, "Please sit down, master." Sanzang quickly returned his courtesies and entered the main building to pay his respects to the divine image. The old man told a servant to bring tea, and when that had been drunk Sanzang asked the old man why the temple was dedicated to the ward altar.

"This place is in the territory of the Western land of Kami," the old man replied, "and behind the temple lives the devout farm family

which built it. 'Ward' means the ward of a village, and the altar is the altar of the local tutelary deity. At the time of the spring ploughing, the summer weeding, the autumn harvest, and the storing away in winter they all bring meat, flowers, and fruit to sacrifice to the altar. They do this to ensure good fortune throughout the four seasons, a rich crop of the five grains, and good health for the six kinds of livestock."

On hearing this Sanzang nodded and said in approval, "How true it is that 'Go three miles from home, and you're in another land.' We have nothing as good as this in our country." The old man then asked him where his home was.

"I come from the land of the Great Tang in the East," Sanzang replied, "and I have imperial orders to go to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and ask for the scriptures. As our journey brought us this way and it is almost night, we have come to this holy temple to ask for a night's lodging. We shall set off at dawn." The old man, who was very pleased to hear this, apologized profusely for having failed in his hospitality and told the servant to prepare a meal. When Sanzang had eaten he thanked the old man.

Monkey's sharp eyes had noticed a clothes–line under the eaves of the building. He went over, tore it down, and hobbled the horse with it. "Where did you steal that horse from?" the old man asked with a smile.

"You don't know what you're talking about," Monkey replied. "We're holy monks going to visit the Buddha, so how could we possibly steal a horse."

"If you didn't steal it," the old man continued, the smile still on his lips, "then why do you have to break my clothes–line because it's got no saddle, bridle or reins?"

Sanzang apologized for Monkey and said to him, "You're too impatient, you naughty monkey. You could have asked the old gentleman for a piece of rope to tether the horse with. There was no need to snap his clothes–line. Please don't be suspicious, sir," Sanzang went on, addressing the old man. "This horse isn't stolen, I can assure

you. When we reached the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge yesterday I was riding a white horse complete with saddle and bridle. We did not know that there was an evil dragon in the stream who had become a spirit, and this dragon swallowed my horse saddle, bridle and all, in a single gulp. Luckily this disciple of mine has certain powers, and he brought the Bodhisattva Guanyin to the side of the gorge, where she caught the dragon and changed it into a white horse, exactly like the original one, to carry me to the Western Heaven to visit the Buddha. It's been less than a day from when we crossed that stream to when we reached your holy shrine, sir, and we haven't yet saddle or bridle for it."

"Please don't be angry, Father. I was only joking," the old man replied. "I never thought your respected disciple would take it seriously. When I was young I had a bit of money, and I was fond of riding a good horse, but many years of troubles and bereavement have taken the fire out of me, and I've come to this miserable end as a sacristan looking after the incense. Luckily the benefactor who owns the farm behind here provides me with the necessities of life. As it happens, I still have a saddle and bridle— —I was so fond of them in the old days that I have never been able to bring myself to sell them, poor as I am. Now that I have heard, venerable master, how the Bodhisattva saved the divine dragon and changed it into a horse to carry you, I feel that I must help too, so I shall bring that saddle and bridle out tomorrow for you to ride on. I beg you to be gracious enough to accept them."

Sanzang thanked him effusively. The servant boy had by now produced the evening meal, and when it was over they spread out their bedding, lamp in hand, and all went to sleep.

When Monkey got up the next morning he said, "Master, that old sacristan promised us the saddle and bridle last night. You must insist and not let him off." Before the words were out of his mouth, the old man appeared with the saddle and bridle in his hands, as well as saddle—cloth, saddle—pad, reins, muzzle and all the other trappings for a horse. Nothing was missing.

As he put it all down in front of the verandah he said, "Master, I humbly offer this saddle and bridle." When Sanzang saw them he accepted them with delight. Then he told Monkey to put them on the horse to see if they fitted him. Monkey went over and picked them up to look at them one by one: they were all fine pieces. There are some verses to prove it that go

The well—carved saddle shines with silver stars

The jeweled stirrups gleam with golden light.

Several layers of saddle – pads are made from wool,

The lead – rope is plaited from purple silk.

The reins are inlaid with flashing flowers,

The blinkers have dancing animals outlined in gold.

The bit is made of tempered steel,

And woollen tassels hang from either end.

Monkey, who was secretly very pleased, put the saddle and bridle on the horse and found that they fitted as if they had been made to measure. Sanzang knelt and bowed to the old man in thanks, at which the old man rushed forward and said, "No, no, how could I allow you to thank me?" The old man did not try to keep them a moment longer, and bade Sanzang mount the horse. When he was out of the gate Sanzang climbed into the saddle, while Monkey carried the luggage. The old man then produced a whip from his sleeve and offered it to Sanzang as he stood beside the road. Its handle was of rattan bound with leather, and its thong of tiger sinew bound at the end with silk.

"Holy monk," he said, "I would also like to give you this as you leave." As Sanzang took it sitting on horseback, he thanked the old man for his generosity.

As Sanzang was on the point of clasping his hands together to take his leave of him, the old man disappeared, and on turning round to look at the temple, the monk could see nothing but a stretch of empty land. He heard a voice saying in the sky, "Holy monk, we have been very abrupt with you. We are the mountain god and the local deity of Potaraka Island, and we were sent by the Bodhisattva Guanyin to give you the saddle and bridle.

You two are now to make for the West as fast as you can, and not to slacken your pace for a moment."

Sanzang tumbled out of the saddle in a panic, and worshipped the

heavens, saying, "My eyes of flesh and my mortal body prevented me from recognizing you, noble gods; forgive me, I beg you. Please convey my gratitude to the Bodhisattva for her mercy." Look at him, kowtowing to the sky more often than you could count. The Great Sage Sun Wukong, the Handsome Monkey King, was standing by the path overcome with laughter and beside himself with amusement. He went over and tugged at the Tang Priest.

"Master," he said, "get up. They're already much too far away to hear your prayers or see your kowtows, so why ever are you doing that?"

"Disciple," Sanzang replied, "what do you mean by standing beside the path sneering at me and not even making a single bow while I've done all those kowtows?"

"You don't know anything," Monkey retorted. "A deceitful pair like that deserve a thrashing. I let them off out of respect for the Bodhisattva. That's quite enough: they couldn't expect me to bow to them too, could they?

I've been a tough guy since I was a kid, and I don't bow to anyone. Even when I meet the Jade Emperor or the Supreme Lord Lao Zi I just chant a 'na – a – aw' and that's all."

"You inhuman beast," said Sanzang, "stop talking such nonsense. Get moving, and don't hold us up a moment longer." With that Sanzang rose to his feet and they set off to the West.

The next two months' journey was peaceful, and they only met Luoluos, Huihuis, wolves, monsters, tigers, and leopards. The time passed quickly, and it was now early spring. They saw mountains and forests clad in emerald brocade as plants and trees put out shoots of green; and when all the plum blossom had fallen, the willows started coming into leaf. Master and disciple traveled along enjoying the beauties of spring, and they Chapter 15

saw that the sun was setting in the West. Sanzang reined in his horse to look into the distance, and in the fold of a mountain he dimly discerned towers and halls.

"Wukong," he said, "can you see if there's anywhere we can go there?" Monkey looked and said, "It must be a temple or a monastery. Let's get

there quickly and spend the night there." Sanzang willingly agreed, and giving his dragon horse a free rein he galloped towards it. If you don't know what sort of place it was that they were going to, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 16

The Monks of the Guanyin Monastery Plot to Take the Treasure

The Monster of the Black Wind Mountain Steals the Cassock

The master whipped on his horse and hurried straight to the temple gate with his disciple to have a look. They saw that it was indeed a monastery:

Hall upon hall,

Cloister after cloister.

Beyond the triple gates

Countless coloured clouds are massed;

Before the Hall of Five Blessings

Coil a thousand wisps of red mist.

Two rows of pine and bamboo,

A forest of locust and cypress trees.

The two rows of pine and bamboo

Are ageless in their elegant purity;

The forest of locust and cypress trees

Has color and beauty.

See how high the drum and bell towers are,

How tall the pagoda.

In peaceful mediation the monks make firm their natures,

As birds sing in the trees outside.

Peace beyond mortal dust is the only true peace;

Emptiness with the Way is the real emptiness.

As the poem goes,

A supreme Jetavana hidden in a green valley,

A monastery set in scenery unbeaten in the world.

Such pure lands are rare on earth;

On most of the famous mountains dwell monks.

Sanzang dismounted, Monkey laid down his burden, and they were just on the point of going in when a crowd of monks came out. This is how they were dressed:

On their heads they wore hats pinned on the left,

On their bodies were clothes of purity.

Copper rings hung from their ears,

And silken belts were tied around their waists.

Slowly they walked on sandals of straw,

As they held wooden clappers in their hands.

With their mouths they were always chanting

Their devotion to the Wisdom.

When Sanzang saw them he stood respectfully beside the gate and greeted them. A monk hastily returned his greeting and apologized for not noticing them before.

"Where are you from?" he asked, "please come to the abbot's rooms and have some tea."

"I have been sent from the East on an imperial mission to worship the Buddha in the Thunder Monastery and ask for the scriptures," Sanzang replied, "and as it is almost night we would like to ask for a night's lodging now that we are here."

"Come inside and sit down, come inside and sit down," the monk said. When Sanzang told Monkey to lead the horse over, the monk was frightened at the sudden sight of him and asked, "What's that thing leading the horse?"

"Keep your voice down," Sanzang urged, "keep your voice down. He has a quick temper, and if he hears you referring to him as 'that thing,' he'll be furious. He's my disciple."

The monk shuddered and bit his finger as he remarked, "Fancy taking a monstrously ugly creature like that for a disciple."

"He may not look it," Sanzang replied, "but ugly as he is, he has his uses."

The monk had no choice but to go through the monastery gate with Sanzang and Monkey, and inside they saw the words CHAN MONASTERY OF GUANYIN written in large letters on the main hall. Sanzang was delighted.

"I have often been the grateful beneficiary of the Bodhisattva's divine mercy," he exclaimed, "but I have not yet been able to kowtow to her in thanks. To worship her in this monastery will be just as good as seeing her in person." On hearing this, the monk, ordering a lay brother to open the doors, invited Sanzang to go in and worship. Monkey tethered the horse, put the luggage down, and went up into the hall with Sanzang, who prostrated himself and put his head on the floor before the golden statue. When the monk went to beat the drum, Monkey started striking the bell. Sanzang lay before the image, praying with all his heart, and when he had finished the monk stopped beating the drum. Monkey, however, was so engrossed in striking the bell, sometimes fast and sometimes slow, that he went on for a very long time.

"He's finished his devotions," a lay brother said, "so what are you still beating the bell for?"

Monkey threw down the bell hammer and said with a grin, "You're ignorant, aren't you? 'Whoever is a monk for a day strikes the bell for

a day': that's me." By then all the monks in the monastery, senior and junior, as well as the abbot and his assistant, had been so startled by the wild noises from the bell that they all came crowding out to ask what savage was making such a din with the bell and drum. Monkey jumped out and cursed them: "Your grandfather Sun Wukong was having some fun."

All the monks collapsed with shock at the sight of him and said as they knelt on the ground, "Lord Thunder God, Lord Thunder God."

"The Thunder God is my great grandson," Monkey replied. "Get up, get up, you've nothing to fear. I'm a lord from the land of the Great Tang empire in the East." The monks all bowed to him, and could not feel easy until Sanzang appeared.

"Please come and drink tea in my rooms," said the abbot of the monastery. The horse was unloaded and led off, while they went round the main hall to a room at the back where they sat down according to their seniority.

The abbot gave them tea and arranged for food to be brought, and after the meal it was still early. As Sanzang was expressing his thanks, two servant boys appeared behind them supporting an aged monk. This is what he looked like:

Chapter 16

231

Journey to the West

A Vairocana miter on his head

Topped with a gleaming cat's—eye jewel.

On his body a gown of brocade,

Edged with gold—mounted kingfisher feathers.

A pair of monkish shoes studded with the Eight Treasures,

A walking stick inlaid with Clouds and stars.

A face covered with wrinkles,

Like the Old Goddess of Mount Li;

A pair of purblind eyes,

Like the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea.

His mouth can't keep out the wind as his teeth have gone;

His back is bent because his muscles are stiff.

"The Patriarch has come," the monks all said. Sanzang bowed low to him in greeting and said, "Your disciple pays his respects, venerable abbot." The aged monk returned his greeting and they both sat down.

"The youngsters have just told me that gentlemen have come from the Tang Empire in the East," he said, "so I have come out to see you."

"Please forgive us for blundering into your monastery so rudely," Sanzang replied.

"Don't put it like that," the aged monk said, going on to ask, "How long a journey is it from the Eastern lands to here?"

"It was over sixteen hundred miles from Chang'an to the Double Boundary Mountain, where I took on this disciple," Sanzang replied. "We traveled on together through the land of Kami, and as that took two months we must have covered getting on for another two thousand miles before reaching here."

"Over three thousand miles," said the aged monk. "I have spent a life of piety and have never been outside the monastery gates, so you could really say that I have been 'looking at heaven from the bottom of a well,' and call mine a wasted life."

"How great is your age, venerable abbot?" Sanzang asked.

"In my stupid way I have lived to be two hundred and seventy," the old monk replied.

"Then you're my ten – thousandth – great grandson," put in Monkey.

"Talk properly," said Sanzang, glaring at him, "Don't be so disrespectful and rude."

"How old are you, sir?" the aged monk asked.

"I don't venture to mention it," Monkey replied. The aged monk then thought that he must have been raving, so he put the matter out of his mind, said no more about it, and ordered tea to be brought for them. A young page brought in three *cloisonne* teacups on a jade tray the color of mutton fat, and another carried in a white alloy teapot from which he poured out three cups of fragrant tea. It had a better color than pomegranate blossom, and its aroma was finer than cassia. When Sanzang saw all this he was full of praise.

"What splendid things," he said, "what splendid things. Wonderful tea in wonderful vessels."

"They're not worth looking at," the old monk replied. "After all, sir, you come from a superior and heavenly court, and have seen many rare things in your wide travels; so how can you give such exaggerated praise to things like that? What treasures did you bring with you from your superior country that I could have a look at?"

"I'm afraid our Eastern land has no great treasures, and even if it did, I would have been unable to bring them on so long a journey."

"Master," put in Monkey, who was sitting beside him, "isn't that cassock I saw in our bundle the other day a treasure? Why don't I take it out for him to see?" When the monks heard him mention the cassock, they smiled sinister smiles.

"What are you smiling at?" Monkey asked.

"We thought it was very funny when you said that a cassock was a treasure," the abbot of the monastery replied. "A priest of my rank has two or three dozen, and our Patriarch, who has been a monk here for two hundred and fifty or sixty years, has seven or eight hundred." He ordered them to be brought out and displayed. The old monk, who was also in on the game, told the lay brothers to open the store−rooms, while friars carried twelve chests out into the courtyard, and unlocked them. Then they set up clothes frames, put rope all around, shook the cassocks open one by one, and hung them up for Sanzang to see. Indeed, the whole building was full of brocade, and the four walls covered with silk.

Monkey examined them one by one and saw that some were made of brocade and some were embroidered with gold.

"Enough, enough, enough," he said. "Put them away, put them away.

I'll bring ours out for you to take a look at."

Sanzang drew Monkey aside and whispered to him, "Disciple, never try to compete with other people's wealth, you and I are alone in this foreign land, and I'm afraid that there may be trouble."

"What trouble can come from letting him look at the cassock?" Monkey asked.

"You don't understand," Sanzang replied. "The ancients used to say, 'Don't let greedy and treacherous men see rare or amusing things.' If he lays his eyes on it, his mind will be disturbed, and if his mind is disturbed, he's bound to start scheming. If you were cautious, you would only have let him see it if he'd insisted; but as it is, this is no trifling matter, and may well be the end of us."

Chapter 16

"Don't worry, don't worry," said Brother Monkey, "I'll look after everything." Watch as without another word of argument he rushes off and opens the bundle, which is already giving off a radiant glow. It still had two layers of oiled paper round it, and when he removed it to take out the cassock and shake it open the hall was bathed in red light and clouds of coloured vapours filled the courtyard. When the monks saw it their hearts were filled with delight and their mouths with praise. It really was a fine cassock.

Hung with pearls of unrivalled quality,

Studded with Buddhist treasures infinitely rare.

Above and below a dragon beard sparkles,

On grass – cloth edged with brocade.

If it is worn, all demons are extinguished;

When donned it sends all monsters down to hell.

It was made by the hands of heavenly Immortals,

And none but a true monk should dare put it on.

When the aged monk saw how rare a treasure it was, his heart was indeed disturbed. He went up to Sanzang and knelt before him. "My fate is indeed a wretched one," he lamented, tears pouring down his cheeks.

Sanzang helped him to his feet again and asked, "Why do you say that, venerable patriarch?"

"You have unfolded this treasure of yours, sir," the aged monk replied, "when it is already evening, so that my eyes are too dim to see it clearly. That is why I say my fate is wretched."

"Send for a candle and take another look," Sanzang suggested.

"My lord, your precious cassock is already shining brightly, so I don't think I would see more distinctly even if a candle were lit," replied the aged monk.

"How would you like to look at it then?" asked Sanzang.

"If, sir, you were in your mercy to set aside your fears and let me take it to my room to examine it closely during the night, I will return it to you in the morning to take to the West. What do you say to that?" This request startled Sanzang, who grumbled at Brother Monkey, "It's all your fault, all your fault."

"He's nothing to be frightened of." Monkey replied with a grin. "I'll pack it up and tell him to take it away to look at. If anything goes wrong, I'll be responsible."

As there was nothing he could do to stop him, Sanzang handed the cassock to the old monk with the words,

"I'll let you take it, but you must give it back to me tomorrow morning in the condition it's in now. I won't Chapter 16

have you getting it at all dirty."

The old monk gleefully told a page to take the cassock to his room, and instructed the other monks to sweep out the front meditation hall, move two rattan beds in, spread out the bedding on them, and invite the two gentlemen to spend the night there; he also arranged for them

to be given breakfast and seen off the next morning. Then everyone went off to bed. Sanzang and his disciple shut the doors of the meditation hall and went to sleep.

After the old monk had tricked them into giving him the cassock, he held it under the lamp in the back room as he wept and wailed over it. This so alarmed the monks that none of them dared go to sleep before he did.

The young page, not knowing what to do, went to tell the other monks, "Grandad's still crying although it's getting on for eleven." Two junior monks, who were among the old man's favorites, went over to ask him why he was crying.

"I'm crying because my accursed fate won't allow me to see the Tang Priest's treasure," he said; to which they replied, "Grandad, in your old age you have succeeded. His cassock is laid before you, and all you have to do is open your eyes and look. There's no need for tears."

"But I can't look at it for long," the aged monk answered. "I'm two hundred and seventy this year, and I've collected all those hundreds of cassocks for nothing. However am I to get hold of that one of his? However am I to become like the Tang priest?"

"Master, you've got it all wrong," the junior monks said. "The Tang Priest is a pilgrim far from home. You should be satisfied with your great seniority and wealth; why ever would you want to be a pilgrim like him?"

"Although I live at home and enjoy my declining years, I've got no cassock like his to wear," the aged monk replied. "If I could wear it for a day, I would close my eyes in peace. I'd be as happy as if I were a monk in my next life."

"What nonsense," the junior monks said. "If you want to wear his cassock, there'll be no problem about that.

We'll keep him for another day tomorrow, and you can wear it for another day. Or we can keep him for ten days and you can wear it for ten days. So why get so upset about it?"

"Even if we kept him for a year," the old monk replied, "I'd only be able to wear it for a year, which wouldn't bring me any glory. I'll still have to give it to him when he went: I can't keep him here for ever."

As they were talking a young monk called Broad Wisdom spoke out.

"Grandad," he said, "if you want it for a long time, that's easy to arrange too."

"What brilliant idea have you got, child?" the aged monk asked, cheering up.

"That Tang Priest and his disciple were so exhausted after their journey that they are both asleep by now,"

Broad Wisdom replied. If we arm some strong monks with swords and spears to break into the meditation hall and kill them, they can be buried in the back garden, and nobody but us will be any the wiser. This way we get their white horse and their luggage as well as the cassock, which will become an heirloom of the monastery.

We would be doing this for posterity." The old monk was very pleased with this suggestion, and he wiped the tears from his eyes as he said, "Very good, very good, a marvellous plan."

Another young monk called Broad Plans, a fellow – student of Broad Wisdom's, came froward and said, "This plan's no good. If we are to kill them, we'll have to keep a sharp eye on them. That old pale – faced one looks easy enough, but the hairy – faced one could be tricky; and if by any chance we fail to kill him, we'll be in deep

trouble. I have a way that doesn't involve using weapons, but I don't know what you'll think of it."

"What do you suggest, my child?" the aged monk asked.

"In my humble opinion," he replied, "we should assemble the head monks of all the cells, senior and junior, and get everyone to put a bundle of firewood outside the meditation hall. When it's set alight, those two will have no escape, and will be burnt to death together with their horse. Even if the people who live around this mountain see the blaze, they'll think that those two burnt down the mediation hall by carelessly starting a fire.

This way they'll both be burnt to death and nobody will know how it happened. Then the cassock will become our monastery's treasure for ever." All the monks present were pleased with this suggestion,

exclaiming,

"Great, great, great; an even better plan." The head of every cell was told to bring firewood, a scheme that was to bring death to the venerable and aged monk, and reduce the Guanyin Monastery to ashes. Now there were seventy or eighty cells in the monastery, and over two hundred junior and senior monks. They shifted firewood all night, piled it up all round the meditation hall so that there was no way out, and prepared to set it alight.

Although Sanzang and he had gone to bed, the magical Monkey's spirit remained alert and his eyes half open even when he was asleep. His suspicions were aroused by the sound of people moving around outside and the rustling of firewood in the breeze. "Why can I hear footsteps in the still of the night?" he wondered. "Perhaps bandits are planning to murder us." He leaped out of bed, and was on the point of opening the door to take a look when he remembered that this might disturb his master, so instead he used his miraculous powers to turn himself into a bee with a shake of his body.

Sweet his mouth and venomous his tail,

Slender his waist and light his body.

He flew like an arrow, threading through willows and flowers,

Seeking their nectar like a shooting star.

A tiny body that could bear great weights,

Carried on the breeze by his frail and buzzing wings.

Thus did he emerge from under the rafters,

Going out to take a look.

He saw that the monks had piled firewood and straw all around the meditation hall and were setting it alight.

Smiling to himself he thought, "So my master was right. This is their idea. They want to kill us and keep our cassock. I wish I could lay into them with my cudgel. If only I wasn't forbidden to use it, I could kill the lot of them; but the master would only be angry with me for murdering them. Too bad. I'll just have to take my chances as they come, and finish them off."

The splendid Monkey leapt in through the Southern Gate of Heaven with a single somersault, startling the heavenly warriors Pang, Liu, Gou and Bi into bowing, and Ma, Zhao, Wen and Guan into bending low as they Chapter 16

all said, "Oh no, oh no! The fellow who turned Heaven upside down is here again."

"There's no need to stand on courtesy or be alarmed, gentlemen," said Monkey with a wave of his hand, "I've come to find the Broad −Visioned Heavenly King."

Before the words were out of his mouth the Heavenly King was there and greeting Monkey with, "Haven't seen you for ages. I heard the other day that the Bodhisattva Guanyin came to see the Jade Emperor to borrow the four Duty Gods, the Six Dings and Jias and the Revealers of the Truth to look after the Tang Priest on his pilgrimage to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures. They were also saying that you were his disciple, so how is it that you have the spare time to come here?"

"Let's cut the cackle," said Monkey. "The Tang priest has run into some villains who have started a fire to burn him to death. It's very urgent, which is why I've come to ask you for the loan of your Anti−fire Cover to save him with. Fetch it at once; I'll bring it straight back."

"You've got it all wrong," the Heavenly King replied. "If villains are trying to burn him, you should rescue him with water. What do you need my Anti−fire Cover for?"

"You don't understand," Monkey continued. "If I try to save him with water, he may still be hurt even if he isn't burnt up. I can only keep him free from injury if you lend me that cover; and with that it doesn't matter how much burning they do. Buck up, buck up! It may be too late already. Don't mess up what I've got to do down there."

"You monkey," said the Heavenly King with a laugh, "You're as wicked as ever, thinking only of yourself and never of others."

"Hurry up, hurry up," Monkey pleaded. "You'll ruin everything if you go on nattering." The Heavenly King, no longer able to refuse, handed the cover to Monkey.

Taking the cover, Monkey pressed down on his cloud and went straight to the roof of the meditation hall, where he spread the cover over the Tang Priest, the dragon horse, and the luggage. Then he went to sit on top of the aged monk's room to protect the cassock. As he watched them starting the fire he kept on reciting a spell and blew some magic breath towards the Southwest, at which a wind arose and fanned the flames up into a wild and roaring blaze. What a fire!

Spreading black smoke,

Leaping red flames;

The spreading black smoke blotted out all the stars in the sky, The leaping red flames made the earth glow red for hundreds of miles.

When it started

It was a gleaming golden snake;

Later on

Chapter 16

It was a spirited horse.

The Three Spirits of the South showed their might,

The Fire God Huilu wielded his magic power,

The bone – dry kindling burned ferociously,

As when the Emperor Suiren drilled wood to start a fire.

Flames leapt up from the boiling oil before the doors,

Brighter than when Lord Lao Zi opens his furnace.

As the cruel fire spreads,

What can stop this willful murder?

Instead of dealing with the disaster

They abetted it.

As the wind fanned the fire.

The flames flew many miles high;

As the fire grew in the might of the wind,

Sparks burst through the Nine Heavens.

Cracking and banging,

Like firecrackers at the end of the year;

Popping and bursting,

Like cannon – fire in battle.

None of the Buddha statues could escape the blaze,

And the guardian gods in the Eastern court had nowhere to hide.

It was fiercer that the fire – attack at Red Cliff,

Or the burning of the Epang Palace.

A single spark can start a prairie fire. In a few moments the raging wind had blown the fire up into an inferno, and the whole Guanyin Monastery was red. Look at the monks as they move away boxes and baskets, grabbing tables and carrying cooking – pots on their heads. The whole monastery was full of the sound of Chapter 16

shouting and weeping. Brother Monkey protected the abbot's rooms at the back, and the Anti – fire Cover covered the meditation hall in front; everywhere else the fire raged, its red flames reflected in the sky and its dazzling brightness shining through the wall.

When the fire broke out, all the animals and devils of the mountain were disturbed. Seven miles due South of the Guanyin Monastery was the Black Wind Mountain, on which there was a Black Wind Cave. In this cave a monster awoke and sat up. Seeing light streaming in through his window, he thought it must be dawn, but when he got up to take a better look he saw a fire blazing to the North.

"Blimey," the monster exclaimed with astonishment, "those careless

monks must have set the Guanyin Monastery on fire. I'd better go and help them." The good monster leapt off on a cloud and went down below the smoke and flames that reached up to the sky. The front halls were all empty, and the fire was burning bright in the cloisters on either side. He rushed forward with long strides and was just calling for water when he noticed that the rooms at the back were not burning as there was someone on the roof keeping the wind away. The moment he realized this and rushed in to look, he saw a magic glow and propitious vapours coming from a black felt bundle on the table. On opening it he found it contained a brocade cassock that was a rare treasure of the Buddhist religion. His mind disturbed by the sight of this valuable object, he forgot about putting out the fire or calling for water and grabbed the cassock, which he made off with in the general confusion. Then he went straight back to his cave by cloud.

The fire blazed on till dawn before burning itself out. The undraped monks howled and wailed as they searched through the ashes for bronze and iron, and picked over the cinders to find gold and silver. Some of them fixed up thatched shelters in what remained of the frames of the buildings, and others were rigging up pots to cook food at the bases of the exposed walls. We will not describe the weeping, the shouting and the confused hubbub.

Brother Monkey grabbed the Anti–fire Cover, took it back to the Southern Gate of Heaven with a single somersault, and returned it to the Broad–visioned Heavenly King with thanks. "Great Sage," said the Heavenly King as he accepted it. "You are as good as your word. I was so worried that if you didn't give me back my treasure, I'd never be able to find you and get it off you. Thank goodness you've returned it."

"Am I the sort of bloke who'd cheat someone to his face?" asked Monkey. "After all, 'If you return a thing properly when you borrow it, it'll be easier to borrow it next time.'"

"As we haven't met for so long, why don't you come into the palace for a while?" said the Heavenly King.

"I'm no longer the man to 'sit on the bench till it rots, talking about the universe,'" Monkey replied. "I'm too busy now that I have to look after the Tang Monk. Please excuse me." Leaving with all speed, he went down on his cloud, and saw that the sun was rising as he went straight to the meditation hall, where he shook himself, turned into a bee, and flew in. On reverting to his true form he saw that his master was still sound asleep.

"Master, get up, it's dawn," he called.

Sanzang woke up, rolled over, and said, "Yes, so it is." When he had dressed he opened the doors, went outside, and saw the walls reddened and in ruins, and the halls and towers gone. "Goodness," he exclaimed in great astonishment, "why have the buildings all disappeared? Why is there nothing but reddened walls?"

"You're still asleep," Monkey replied. "There was a fire last night."

"Why didn't I know about it?" Sanzang asked.

"I was protecting the meditation hall, and as I could see you were asleep, master, I didn't disturb you,"

Monkey replied.

"If you were able to protect the meditation hall, why didn't you put out the fire in the other buildings?"

Sanzang asked. Monkey laughed.

"I'll tell you, master. What you predicted actually happened. They fancied that cassock of ours and planned to burn us to death. If I hadn't noticed, we'd be bones and ashes by now."

"Did they start the fire?" asked Sanzang who was horrified to learn this.

"Who else?" replied Monkey.

"Are you sure that you didn't cook this up because they were rude to you?" Sanzang asked.

"I'm not such a rascal as to do a thing like that," said Monkey. "Honestly and truly, they started it. Of course, when I saw how vicious they were I didn't help put the blaze out. I helped them with a slight breeze instead."

"Heavens! Heavens! When a fire starts you should bring water, not wind."

"You must know the old saying – –'If people didn't harm tigers, tigers wouldn't hurt people.' If they hadn't started a fire, I wouldn't have caused a wind."

"Where's the cassock? Don't say that it's been burnt too."

"It's all right; it hasn't been burnt. The abbots' cell where it was kept didn't catch fire."

"I don't care what you say. If it's come to any harm, I'll recite that spell till it kills you."

"Don't do that," pleaded Monkey desperately, "I promise to bring that cassock back to you. Wait while I fetch it for you, and then we'll be on our way." With Sanzang leading the horse, and Monkey carrying the luggage, they went out of the meditation hall and straight to the abbot's lodgings at the back.

When the grief–stricken monks of the monastery suddenly saw master and disciple emerge with horse and luggage from the meditation hall they were terrified out of their wits, and screamed, "Their avenging ghosts have come to demand our lives."

"What do you mean, avenging ghosts coming to demand your lives?" Monkey shouted. "Give us back our cassock at once."

The monks all fell to their knees and kowtowed, saying, "Masters, wrongs are always avenged, and debts always have to be paid. If you want lives, it's nothing to do with us; It was the old monk and Broad Plans who cooked up the plot to kill you. Please don't punish us."

Monkey snorted with anger and roared, "I'll get you, you damned animals. Who asked for anyone's life? Just bring out that cassock and we'll be on our way."

Two brave men from among the monks said, "Masters, you were burnt to death in the meditation hall, and now you come back to ask for the cassock. Are you men or ghosts?"

"You cattle," sneered Monkey, "there wasn't any fire. Go and look at

the meditation hall and then we'll see what you have to say." The monks rose to their feet, and when they went forward to look, they saw that there was not even the slightest trace of scorching on the door and the window–frames. The monks, now struck with fear, realized that Sanzang was a divine priest, and Monkey a guardian god.

They all kowtowed to the pair of them and said, "Our eyes are blind. We failed to recognize saints sent down from Heaven. Your cassock is in the abbot's rooms at the back." Sanzang went past a number of ruined walls and buildings, sighing endlessly, and saw that the abbot's rooms at the back had indeed not been burnt. The monks all rushed in shouting. "Grandad, the Tang priest is a saint, and instead of being burnt to death he's wrecked our home. Bring the cassock out at once and give it back to him."

Now the old monk had been unable to find the cassock, which coming on top of the destruction of the monastery had him distraught with worry. When the monks asked him for it, he was unable to reply. Seeing no way out of his quandary, he bent his head down and dashed it against the wall. He smashed his skull open and expired as his blood poured all over the floor. There are some verses about it: Alas that the aged monk in his folly

Lived so long a life for nothing.

He wanted the cassock as an heirloom for the monastery.

Forgetting that what is Buddha's is not as mortal things.

As he took the changeable for the eternal,

His sorry end was quite inevitable.

What use were Broad Wisdom and Broad Plans?

To harm others for gain always fails.

The other monks began to howl in desperation, "Our Patriarch has dashed his brains out, and we can't find the cassock, so whatever shall we do?"

"I think you've hidden it somewhere," Monkey said. "Come out, all of you, and bring me all the registers. I'm going to check that you're all here." The senior and junior abbots brought the two registers in which all the monks, novices, pages, and servants were registered. There were a total of two hundred and thirty names in them. Asking his

master to sit in the place of honour, Monkey called out and marked off each of the names, making the monks open up their clothes for his inspection. When he had checked each one carefully there was no sign of the cassock. Then he searched carefully through all the boxes and baskets that had been saved from the flames, but again he could find no trace of it. Sanzang, now absolutely furious with Brother Monkey, started to recite the spell as he sat up high.

Monkey fell to the ground in great agony, clutching his head and pleading, "Stop, stop, I swear to return the cassock to you." The monks, trembling at the sight, begged him to stop, and only then did he shut his mouth and desist.

Monkey leapt to his feet, took his iron cudgel from behind his ear, and was going to hit the monks when Sanzang shouted, "You ape, aren't you afraid of another headache? Are you going to misbehave again? Don't move your hand or hurt anyone. I want you to question them again instead."

The monks all kowtowed to him and entreated him most pitifully to spare their lives. "We've honestly not seen it. It's all that dead old bastard's fault. After he saw your cassock yesterday evening he cried till late into the night, not even wanting to look at it as he worked out a plan by which it could belong to the monastery for ever. He wanted to burn you to death, masters, but when the fire started, a gale wind blew up, and we were all busy trying to put the blaze out and move away what stuff we could. We don't know where the cassock went."

Monkey went into the abbot's quarters at the back in a great rage and carried out the corpse of the old monk who had killed himself. When he stripped the body he found no treasures on it, so he dug up the floor of his room to a depth of three feet, again without finding a sign of the cassock. Monkey thought for a moment and then asked, "Are there any monsters turned spirits around here?"

"If you hadn't asked, sir, I'd never have imagined you wanted to know," the abbot replied. "There is a mountain due South of here called the Black Wind Mountain, and in the Black Wind Cave—on it there lives a Great Black King. That old dead bastard of ours was always discussing the Way with him. There aren't any other evil spirits

apart from him."

"How far is the mountain from here?" Monkey asked.

"Only about seven miles," the abbot replied. "It's the mountain you can see over there."

Monkey smiled and said to Sanzang. "Don't worry, master, there's no need to ask any more questions. No doubt about it: it must have been stolen by that black monster."

"But his place is seven miles from here, so how can you be sure it was him?" Sanzang asked.

"You didn't see the fire last night," Brother Monkey retorted. "The flames were leaping up hundreds of miles high, and the glow penetrated the triple heavens. You could have seen it seventy miles away, let alone seven.

I'm convinced that he saw the glare and took the chance to slip over here quietly. When he saw that our cassock was a treasure, he must have stolen it in the confusion. Just wait while I go and find him."

"If you go, who's going to protect me?" asked Sanzang.

"Don't worry, gods are watching over you in secret, and in the visible sphere I'll make these monks serve you." With that he called the community together and said, "I want some of you to go and bury that old ghost, and some of you to serve my master and look after our white horse." The monks all assented obediently, and Monkey continued, "I won't have you agreeing glibly now but not waiting on them when I've gone. Those of you who look after my master must do so with pleasant expressions on your faces, and those who feed the horse must make sure he gets the right amount of hay and water. If there's the slightest mistake, I'll hit you like this." He pulled out his cudgel, and smashed a fire—baked brick wall to smithereens; the shock from this shook down seven or eight more walls. At the sight of this the monks' bones turned to jelly, and they knelt down and kowtowed to him with tears pouring down their cheeks.

"Don't worry, master, you can go— —we'll look after him. We promise not to show any disrespect." The splendid Monkey then went straight to the Black Wind Mountain with a leap of his somersault cloud to look for the cassock.

Chapter 16

The Golden Cicada left the capital in search of the truth,

Leaning on his staff as he went to the distant West.

Along his route were tigers, leopards and wolves;

Few were the artisans, merchants, or scholars he met.

In a foreign land be encountered a stupid and covetous monk,

And depended entirely on the mighty Great Sage Equaling Heaven.

When fire and wind destroyed the monastery,

A black bear came one night to steal the silken cassock.

If you don't know whether the cassock was found on this journey or how things turned out, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 17

Brother Monkey Makes Trouble on the Black Wind Mountain

Guanyin Subdues the Bear Spirit

As Monkey leapt up with a somersault, the senior and junior monks, the novices, the page–boys, and the servants of the monastery all bowed low to the sky and said, "Master, you must be a cloud–riding Immortal come down from Heaven. No wonder that fire can't burn you. Damn that stupid old skinflint of ours: he destroyed himself with his own scheming."

"Please rise, gentlemen," replied Sanzang, "there's no need to hate him. If my disciple finds the cassock our troubles will all come to an end; but if he doesn't find it, he has rather a nasty temper and I'm afraid that none of you will escape with your lives." When they heard this warning, the monks' hearts were in their mouths, and they implored Heaven to let him find the cassock and spare their lives.

Once in mid–air, the Great Sage Sun Wukong reached at the Black Wind Mountain with one twist of his waist. Stopping his cloud while he took a careful look around, he saw that it was indeed a fine

mountain. It was a spring day:

The myriad valleys' streams compete,

A thousand precipices vie in beauty.

Where the birds call, no man is;

When the blossoms fall, the trees are still fragrant.

After the rain, the sky and the lowering cliff are moist;

As the pines bend in the wind, they spread an emerald screen.

The mountain herbs grow,

The wild flowers blossom,

Hanging over beetling crags;

The wild fig thrives

And fine trees flourish

On craggy range and flat – topped hill.

You meet no hermits,

And can find no wood – cutters.

Beside the stream a pair of cranes drink,

And wild apes gambol on the rocks.

Peaks like mussel – shells, gleaming black,

Lofty and green as they shine through the mist.

As Monkey was looking at the mountain scenery he heard voices from in front of the grassy slope. He slipped off to conceal himself under the rock – face and take a discreet look. He saw three fiends sitting on the ground.

At the head was a dark fellow, to his left was a Taoist, and to his right a white−robed scholar, and they were all talking about lofty and broad matters: about refining cinnabar and mercury with tripods and cauldrons; and about the white snow, mercury, the yellow sprout, lead, and other esoteric teachings.

In the middle of this the dark fellow said, "As it's my birthday tomorrow, I hope you two gentlemen will do me the honour of coming along."

"We celebrate your birthday every year, Your Majesty," the white −robed scholar replied, "so of course we shall come this year."

"I came by a treasure last night," the dark fellow went on, "a brocade cassock for a Buddha, and it's a wonderful thing. I'm going to give a big banquet for it the day after tomorrow and I'm inviting all you mountain officials to come and congratulate me, which is why I'm calling it a 'Buddha's Robe Banquet.'"

"Wonderful, wonderful," the Taoist exclaimed with a smile. "Tomorrow I'll come to congratulate you on your birthday, and the day after I'll come again for the banquet."

As soon as Monkey heard him mention the Buddha's robe he was sure it was their treasure, and unable to hold back his anger he leapt out from the cliff brandishing his gold−banded cudgel with both hands and shouting, Chapter 17

"I'll get you, you gang of devils. You stole our cassock, and now you think you're going to have a 'Buddha's Robe Banquet'. Give it back to me at once."

"Don't move," he barked, swinging the cudgel and bringing it down towards the monster's head. The dark fellow turned into a wind to flee in terror, and the Taoist rode off on a cloud; so Monkey was only able to slay the white−robed scholar with a blow from the club. When he dragged the body over to look at it, he saw that it was a white −patterned snake spirit. In his anger he picked the corpse up and tore it to pieces, then went into the recesses of the mountain in search of the dark fellow. Rounding a sharp pinnacle and traversing a dizzy precipice, he saw a cave palace in the cliff:

Thick, misty clouds,

Dense with cypress and pine.

The thick and misty clouds fill the gates with color;

The dense stands of cypress and pine surround the door with green.

For a bridge there is a dried – out log,

And wild fig coils around the mountain peaks.

Birds carry red petals to the cloud – filled valley;

Deer tread on scented bushes as they climb the stone tower.

Before the gates the season brings out flowers,

As the wind wafts their fragrance.

Around the willows on the dike the golden orioles wheel;

Butterflies flit among the peach – trees on the bank.

This ordinary scene can yet compete

With lesser views in Fairyland.

When he reached the gates Monkey saw that they were very strongly fastened, and above them was a stone tablet inscribed with the words Black Wind Cave of the Black Wind Mountain in large letters. He brandished his cudgel and shouted, "Open up!" at which the junior devil who was on the gates opened them and asked,

"Who are you, and how dare you come and attack our Immortals' cave?"

"You damned cur," Monkey railed at him. "How dare you call a place like this an 'Immortals' cave'? What right have you to use the word 'Immortal'? Go in and tell that dark fellow of yours that if he gives back my cassock at once, I'll spare your lives."

The junior devil rushed in and reported, "The 'Buddha's Robe Banquet' is off, Your Majesty. There's hairy－faced thunder god outside the gates who's demanding the cassock."

The dark fellow, who had barely had time to shut the gates and had not even sat down properly since Brother Monkey chased him, away from the grassy slope, thought on hearing this news, "This wretch has come from I don't know where, and now he has the effrontery to come yelling at my gates." He called for his armour, tightened his belt, and strode out of the gates with a black－tasseled spear in his hands. Monkey appeared outside the gates holding his iron cudgel and glaring wide－eyed at that ferocious－looking monster.

His bowl－shaped iron helmet shone like fire;

His black bronze armour gleamed.

A black silk gown with billowing sleeves,

A dark green silken sash with fringes.

In his hands a spear with black tassels,

On his feet a pair of dark leather boots.

Lightning flashed from his golden pupils;

He was indeed the Black Wind King of the mountains.

"This wretch looks as though he's been a brick－burner or a coal －digger," Monkey thought as he smiled to himself. "He's so black he must be the local soot－painter."

"What gives you the nerve to act so big round here, monk, and what the hell are you?" shouted the monster at the top of his voice.

Monkey rushed him with his cudgel and roared, "Cut the cackle, and give me back the cassock at once, kid."

"What monastery d'you come from? Where did you lose the cassock? Why come and ask for it here?"

"My cassock was in the rear abbot's lodgings at the Guanyin Monastery due North of here. When the monastery caught fire you made the most of the confusion to do a bit of looting and brought it back here, you wretch, and now you're planning to hold a 'Buddha's Robe Banquet'. Don't try to brazen it out. Give it back at once, and I'll spare

your life, but if even a hint of a 'no' gets past your teeth I'll push the Black Wind Mountain over, trample your cave flat, and flatten every one of you fiends into noodles."

The monster laughed evilly and replied, "You've got a nerve. You were the one who started the fire last night.

You were sitting on the roof of the abbot's lodgings and calling up a wind to make it worse. What's it to you if I did take a cassock? Where are you from? Who are you? You must have a lot of tricks up your sleeve if you have the nerve to talk so big."

Chapter 17

"You can't recognize your own grandfather." Brother Monkey replied. "I, your grandfather, am the disciple of His Highness the Patriarch Sanzang, the younger brother of the Emperor of the Great Tang. My name is Brother Sun Wukong. If you want to know about my tricks, just give me the word. I'll slaughter you here and now, and send your souls flying."

"I've never heard of these tricks of yours, so you'd better tell me about them."

"Stand still and listen to me, my child," Monkey replied, and went on to say:

"Great have been my magic powers since childhood;

Changing with the wind, I show my might.

Nourishing my nature and cultivating the truth,

I have lived out the days and months,

Saving my life by jumping beyond the cycle of rebirth.

Once I searched sincerely for the Way

Climbing the Spirit Terrace Mountain to pick medicinal herbs.

On that mountain lives an ancient Immortal

One hundred and eight thousand years old.

I took him as my master,

Hoping that he would show me a road to immortality.

He said that the elixir is in one's own body— —

It is a waste of effort to seek it outside.

I learned a great spell of immortality.

I could scarcely have survived without it.

Turning my gaze inwards, I sat and calmed my mind,

While the sun and moon in my body intermingled.

Ignoring the affairs of the world, I made my desires few,

When senses, body, and mind were purified, my body was firm.

Reversing the years and returning to youth is then easily done;
Chapter 17

247

Journey to the West

The road to immortality and sagehood was not long.

In three years I acquired a magic body,

That did not suffer like a common one.

I wandered around the Ten Continents and Three Islands,

The corners of the sea and the edge of the sky.

I was due to live over three hundred years

But could not yet fly up to the Nine Heavens.

I got a real treasure for subduing sea dragons:

An iron cudgel banded with gold.

On the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit

I was supreme commander;

In the Water Curtain Cave

I assembled the fiendish hosts.

The Great Jade Emperor sent me a decree

Conferring high rank and the title 'Equaling Heaven'.

More than once I wrecked the Hall of Miraculous Mist,

And stole the Queen Mother's peaches several times.

A hundred thousand heavenly soldiers in serried ranks

Came with spears and swords to put me down.

I sent the heavenly kings back up there in defeat,

Made Nazha flee in pain at the head of his men.

The True Lord Erlang, skilled at transformations,

Lao Zi, Guanyin and the Jade Emperor

Watched me being subdued from the Southern Gate of Heaven.

As he was given some help by Lord Lao Zi,

Erlang captured me and took to Heaven.

Chapter 17

I was tied to the Demon – subduing Pillar,

And divine soldiers were ordered to cut off my head.

Though hacked with swords and pounded with hammers

I remained unharmed.

So then I was struck with thunder and burned with fire.

As I really do have magic powers,

I was not in the slightest bit afraid.

They took me to Lao Zi's furnace to be refined.

The Six Dings roasted me slowly with divine fire.

When the time was up and the furnace opened, out I jumped,

And rushed round Heaven, my cudgel in my hand.

No one could stop me making trouble everywhere,

And I caused chaos in the thirty – three Heavens.

Then our Tathagata Buddha used his Dharma power

And dropped the Five Elements Mountain on my back.

There I was crushed for full five hundred years,

Until Sanzang came from the land of Tang.

Now I have reformed and am going to the West

To climb the Thunder Peak and see the Buddha.

Enquire throughout the Four Seas, Heaven and Earth:

You'll find that I'm the greatest monster ever.

On hearing this the fiend laughed and said, "So you're the Protector of the Horses who wrecked Heaven, are you?"

Monkey, who got angrier at being addressed by this title than at anything else, was furious. "You vicious monster. You steal the cassock and refuse to give it back, and on top of that you insult your lord and master.

Just hold it, and see how you like my club." The dark fellow dodged the blow and then riposted with his spear.

The pair of them fought a fine battle.

Chapter 17

An As – You – Will cudgel,

A black – tasseled spear,

And two men showing their toughness at the mouth of a cave.

One stabs at heart and face,

The other tries for arm and head.

This one strikes cunning sideswipes with a club,

That one brandishes his spear in three swift movements.

The white tiger climbs the mountain to sink in his claws;

The yellow dragon lying on the road turns round fast.

Snorting out coloured mists,

Disgorging rays of light,

The two immortal fiends are hard to choose between:

One is the Sage Equaling Heaven who has cultivated the truth;

The other is the Great Black King become a spirit.

On this battlefield in the mountains

The pair of them fight for the cassock.

The fiend fought some ten inconclusive rounds with Monkey, and as the sun was now rising steadily towards the zenith, the dark fellow raised his halberd to block the iron cudgel and said, "Brother Monkey, let's lay down our arms. I'll come back and fight you again after I've eaten."

"You accursed beast," Monkey replied, "how can you call yourself a real man? If you were, you wouldn't be needing to eat after only half a day. I never even tasted water once in those five hundred years I spent under the mountain, but I wasn't hungry. Stop making excuses, and don't go. I'll let you have your meal if you give me back my cassock." The fiend waved his halberd in a feint, withdrew into the cave, and shut the doors fast behind him. Summoning his junior goblins, he

ordered that a banquet be spread and wrote invitations asking all the devil kings of the mountain to come to the celebratory feast.

Monkey charged the gates but was unable to force them open, so he had to go back to the Guanyin Monastery, where the monks had buried the old patriarch and were now all in attendance on the Tang Priest in the abbot's quarters. Breakfast was over, and lunch was being brought in. Just as they were bringing soup and more hot water, Monkey descended from the sky. The monks all bowed low and took him into the abbot's room to see Chapter 17

Sanzang.

"Ah, you're back, Wukong," he said. "What about the cassock?"

"I've found the answer. We misjudged these monks. It was in fact stolen by a fiend from the Black Wind Mountain. I went to have a quiet look for him and found him sitting in front of grassy slope talking to a white－gowned scholar and an old Taoist. He's a self －confessed monster, and he said with his own mouth that he was inviting all the evil spirits to come and celebrate his birthday tomorrow, and that as he had come by a brocade Buddha's robe last night he wanted to celebrate that too, so he was going to give a great feast that he called an 'Assembly for the Celebration and Admiration of the Buddha's Robe'. I rushed him and took a swipe at him with my club, but the dark fellow turned into a puff of wind and fled. The Taoist disappeared too, and I was only able to kill the white－clad scholar, who was a white snake turned spirit. I went to the mouth of his cave as fast as I could and told him to come out and fight me. He admitted that he had carried it off. We fought for half a day without either of us winning, and then the monster went back to his cave for lunch and shut the stone gates behind him. He was too scared to come out again, so I came back to give you this news, master. Now we know where the cassock is, there's no need to worry that he won't give it back."

On hearing this, the monks put their hands together or kowtowed as they invoked Amitabha Buddha and exclaimed, "He's found where it is －－we're saved."

"Don't be so happy about it," Monkey warned, "I haven't got it yet, and my master hasn't left your monastery yet. You'll have to wait till I've

recovered the cassock and my master has been seen off properly from here before you can consider yourselves safe. And if there is the slightest mistake, remember that I'm a very quick – tempered boss. Have you given my master the best food and tea? Have you given my horse the best fodder?"

"Yes, yes, yes," the monks hastened to assure him. "We haven't been remiss in any way while looking after his Reverence."

"While you were away all morning I've drunk tea three times and eaten twice, and they have not been at all offhand with me," Sanzang explained. "You'd better go back and do everything possible to recover that cassock."

"Don't be in such a hurry," Monkey replied. "I know where it is, and I guarantee that I'll capture this wretch and return the cassock to you. There's no need to worry."

As he was talking the senior abbot came in, set out the vegetarian meal, and invited Lord Monkey to eat. After swallowing a few mouthfuls Monkey mounted his magic cloud once more and went off on his hunt. On his way he saw a junior goblin going along the main path with a rosewood box under his left arm. Guessing that there must be some kind of letter in the box Monkey raised his cudgel and brought it down on his head. The blow did not just kill the goblin: it left him looking like a hamburger. Throwing his remains aside, Brother Monkey wrenched open the box and saw that it contained an invitation: Your pupil Bear presents his humble greetings to Your Excellency, the Supreme and Venerable One of the Golden Pool:

I am deeply grateful for the magnificent kindness that I have so frequently received from you. When I saw the fire last night I failed to put it out, but I am sure that your divine intelligence will have suffered no harm from it. As your pupil has been lucky enough to obtain a Buddha's robe, I am giving a banquet, to which I hope you

will come to appreciate the robe. I would be profoundly grateful if you would honour me with your presence at the appointed time. Written two days beforehand.

On reading this, Monkey roared with laughter and said, "That crooked

old monk. He thoroughly deserved to be killed. He'd been ganging up with evil spirits, had he? It's odd that he should have lived to be two hundred and seventy. I suppose that evil spirit must have taught him a few tricks about controlling his vital essence, which was why he lived so long. I can remember what he looked like, so I think I'll make myself look like him and go into that cave. This way I can see where he's put that cassock, and if I'm lucky I'll be able to get back and save a lot of trouble.

The splendid Great Sage recited a spell, faced the wind, and made himself look just like the old monk. He hid his cudgel, walked straight to the entrance of the cave, and shouted, "Open up."

The junior goblin opened up, and as soon as he saw him he rushed back to report, "Your Majesty, the Elder of the Golden Pool is here." The monster was astounded.

"I've only just sent a youngster with an invitation for him, and the message can't have reached him yet. How could he possibly have got here so fast? The youngster can't even have met him. Obviously Brother Monkey has sent him here to ask for the cassock. Steward, hide that cassock somewhere where he won't see it."

As he came to the front gates Monkey saw that the courtyard was green with bamboo and cypress, while peach and plum trees vied in beauty amid blossoming shrubs and fragrant orchids. It was a cave paradise. He also saw a couplet inscribed on the gates that read:

In peaceful retirement deep in the hills, one is free of vulgar worries;
Dwelling quietly in a magic cave, happy in divine simplicity.

"This wretch has escaped from the dirt and dust of the world," thought Monkey, "and is a fiend who understands life." Going through the gates he went further inside and passed through a triple gate. Here were carved and painted beams, light windows and coloured doors. He saw that the dark fellow was wearing a dark green silken tunic over which was slung a black patterned silk cloak; on his head was a soft black hat, and on his feet a pair of dusky deerskin boots.

When he saw Monkey approaching he straightened his clothes and came down the steps to greet him with the words, "I've been looking forward to seeing you for days, Golden Pool. Please take a seat." Monkey returned his courtesies, and when they had finished greeting each other they sat down and drank tea. Then the evil spirit bowed and said, "I sent you a note just now asking you to come over the day

after tomorrow. Why is it that you've come to see me today, old friend?"

"I was on my way here to visit you when I happened to see your message that you were giving a 'Buddha's Robe Banquet,' so I hurried over to ask you to let me have a look."

"You've misunderstood, old friend," replied the evil monster with a smile. "It's the Tang Priest's cassock, and as he's been staying at your place you must have seen it there. Why come here to see it?"

"When I borrowed it," Monkey said, "it was too late at night for me to be able to look at it. Since then, to my great surprise, it has been taken by Your Majesty. On top of that, the monastery has been burnt down and I have lost everything I own. That disciple of the Tang Priest's is quite a bold fellow, but he could not find it anywhere. I have come here to look at it as Your Majesty has had the great good fortune to recover it."

As they were talking, a junior goblin came in from patrolling the mountain to announce, "Your Majesty, a terrible thing's happened. Brother Monkey has killed the lieutenant who is taking the invitation by the main path, and taken the chance of making himself look like the Elder of the Golden Pool to come here and trick the Buddha's robe out of you."

"I wondered why the elder came today," the monster thought, "and why he came so soon, and now I see that it's really *him."* He leapt to his feet, grabbed his halberd, and thrust at Monkey. Monkey pulled the cudgel from his ear in a flash, reverted to his true form, parried the halberd's blade, jumped out from the main room into the courtyard, and fought his way back out through the front gates. This terrified all the fiends in the cave, scaring the wits out of young and old alike. The fine combat on the mountain that ensued was even better than the previous one.

The courageous Monkey King was now a monk,

The cunning dark fellow had hidden the Buddha's robe.

At matching words they were both masters;

In making the most of chances there was nothing between them.

The cassock could not be seen, whatever one wished;

A hidden treasure is a true wonder.

When the junior demon on mountain patrol announced a disaster, The old fiend in his fury showed his might.

Monkey transformed himself and fought his way out of the cave, As halberd and cudgel strove to decide the issue.

The club blocked the lengthy halberd with resounding clangs;

The halberd gleamed as it parried the iron club.

Sun Wukong's transformations were rare on earth;

Few could rival the foul fiend's magic.

One wanted to take the robe to bring himself long life;

One had to have the cassock to return with honour.

This bitter struggle was not to be broken up;

Even a Living Buddha could not have resolved it.

From the mouth of the cave the pair of them fought to the top of the mountain, and from the top of the mountain they battled their way beyond the clouds. They breathed out wind and mist, set sand and stones flying, and struggled till the red sun set in the West, but the contest was still undecided. Then the monster said, "Stop for the moment, Monkey. It's too late to go on fighting tonight. Go away, go away. Come back tomorrow, and we'll see which of us is to live and which to die."

"Don't go, my child," Monkey shouted back. "If you want to fight, fight properly. Don't use the time of day as an excuse to get out of it." With

that he struck wildly at the dark fellow, who changed himself into a puff of wind, went back to his cave, and fastened the stone gates tightly shut.

Monkey could think of no alternative to going back to the Guanyin Monastery. Bringing his cloud down, he called to his master, who had been waiting for him anxiously until he appeared suddenly before his eyes.

Sanzang was very glad, until seeing that there was no cassock in Monkey's hands his happiness turned to fear.

"Why haven't you got the cassock this time either?" he asked.

Brother Monkey produced the invitation from his sleeve, and as he handed it to Sanzang he said, "Master, that fiend was friends with that dead crook. He sent a junior goblin with this invitation asking him to go to a

'Buddha's Robe Banquet'. I killed the goblin, made myself look like the old monk, went into the cave, and tricked a cup of tea out of them. I asked him to let me see the cassock, but he wouldn't bring it out. Then as we were sitting there a mountain patrolman of some sort gave the game away, so he started to fight me. We fought till just now, and neither of us was on top, when he saw that it was late, shot back to his cave and shut the stone doors behind him. This meant that I had to come back for the moment."

"How do your tricks compare with his?" Sanzang asked.

"I'm not much better than him," Monkey replied, "and I can only keep my end up." Sanzang read the invitation and handed it to the prelate.

"Can it be that your Patriarch was an evil spirit?" he said.

The prelate fell to knees as fast as he could and said, "My lord, he was human. But because that Great Black King was cultivating the ways of humanity he often came to our temple to discuss the scriptures with our Patriarch, and taught him some of the arts of nourishing the divine and controlling the vital essence. That was why they were on friendly terms."

"None of these monks have anything satanic about them," Monkey said. "They all have their heads in the air and their feet on the ground, and are taller and fatter than I am. They're not evil spirits. Do you see where it says 'Your pupil Bear' on the invitation? He must be a black

bear who has become a spirit."

To this Sanzang said, "There's an old saying that 'Bears and baboons are alike'. If they are all animals, how can they become spirits?" Monkey laughed and replied, "I'm an animal too, but I became the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. I'm just the same as him. All the creatures on heaven and earth that have nine openings to their bodies can cultivate their conduct and become Immortals."

"Just now you said his abilities were the same as yours, so how are you going to beat him and get the cassock back?" Sanzang went on to ask. "Don't worry, don't worry," Monkey replied, "I can manage." As they were talking, the monks brought their evening meal and invited them to eat. The Sanzang asked for a lamp and went to bed in the front meditation hall as before. The monks all slept under thatched shelters rigged up against the walls, leaving the abbot's quarters at the back for the senior and junior prelate. It was a peaceful night.

The Milky Way was clear,

The jade firmament free of dust.

The sky was full of coruscating stars,

A single wave wiped out the traces.

Stilled were all sounds,

And the birds were silent on a thousand hills.

The fisherman's light beside the bank was out,

The Buddha – lamp in the pagoda dimmed.

Last night the abbot's bell and drum had sounded;

This evening the air was filled with weeping.

This night he spent asleep in the monastery. Sanzang, however, could not sleep for thinking about the cassock.

He turned over, and seeing that the sky was growing light outside the window, got straight out of bed and said, "Monkey, it's light, go and get the cassock." Brother Monkey bounded out of bed, and in an instant a host of monks was in attendance, offering hot water.

"Look after my master properly," he said. "I'm off."

Sanzang got out of bed and seized hold of him. "Where are you going?" he asked.

"I've been thinking," said Monkey, "that this whole business is the Bodhisattva Guanyin's fault. Although this is her monastery and she receives the worship of all these monks, she allows that evil spirit to live in the neighbourhood. I'm going to the Southern Sea to find her and ask her to come here herself to make that evil spirit give us back the cassock."

"When will you come back?" Sanzang asked.

"After you've finished breakfast at the earliest, and by midday at latest, I'll have done the job. Those monks had better look after you well. I'm off now."

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than he had disappeared without a trace and reached the Southern Sea. Stopping his cloud to

take a look, he saw:

A vast expanse of ocean,

Waters stretching till they joined the sky.

Propitious light filled the firmament,

Auspicious vapours shone over mountains and rivers.

A thousand snow－capped breakers roared at the azure vault,

A myriad misty waves reared at the sky.

Water flew in all directions,

Torrents poured everywhere.

As the water flew in all directions it echoed like thunder;

As the torrents poured everywhere they crashed and roared.

Let us leave the sea,

And consider what lay in it:

A precious mountain in many a misty color－－

Red, yellow, purple, black, green, and blue.

Then did he see the beautiful land of Guanyin,

Potaraka Island in the Southern Sea.

What a wonderful place to go－－

Towering peaks

Cutting through the sky,

With a thousand kinds of exotic flowers below them,

And every type of magical herb.

The wind shook priceless trees,

The sun shone on golden lotus.

Guanyin's palace was roofed with glazed tiles,

The gates of the Tide Cave were set with tortoise shell.

In the shade of green willows parrots talked,

While peacocks called amid purple bamboo.

On the marbled stone

The protecting gods are majestically severe; .

Before the agate strand

Stands the mighty Moksa.

Not pausing to take in the whole of this exotic scene, Monkey brought his cloud straight down to land under the bamboo grove. A number of devas were already there to meet him, and they said, "The Bodhisattva told us some time ago that you had been converted, Great Sage, and praised you very warmly. But if you are now protecting the Tang Priest, how have you found the time to come here?"

"Because something has happened while I've been escorting him on his journey. Please go and tell the Bodhisattva that I'd like an audience with her." When the devas went into the cave to report this, Guanyin summoned him inside. Monkey did as he was told and bowed to her beneath the lotus throne.

"What have you come for?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"My master's journey has brought him to a monastery of yours," Monkey replied, "and I find that although you accept incense from its monks, you allow a black bear spirit to live in the neighbourhood, and have let him steal my master's cassock. I've tried to take it off him a number of times but got nowhere, so now I've come to ask you to demand it from him."

"What nonsense, you ape," the Bodhisattva retorted. "Even if a bear spirit has stolen your cassock, what business have you to ask me to go and demand it for you? It all happened because you wanted to show it

off, you big – headed and evil baboon, in front of petty – minded people. On top of that, in your wickedness you called up the wind to spread the fire that burnt down my monastery. And now you have the nerve to try your tricks here."

These words from the Bodhisattva made Monkey realize that she knew all about the past and the future, so he hastily bowed down in reverence and pleaded, "Bodhisattva, forgive your disciple his sins, everything you say is true. All the same, my master will recite that spell again because that monster won't give back the cassock, and I couldn't bear the agonizing headache. That's why I came to bother you, Bodhisattva. I beg you in your mercy to help me catch that evil spirit, get the cassock back, and carry on towards the West."

"That monster's magical powers are certainly no weaker than yours," the Bodhisattva said. "Very well then, out of consideration for the Tang Priest I'll go there with you." Monkey thanked her and bowed again, asked her to come out, and rode on the same magic cloud as her. In next to no time they reached the Black Wind Mountain, where they landed the cloud and headed for the cave on foot.

Chapter 17

257

Journey to the West

As they were on their way, a Taoist priest appeared on the mountain slope. He was carrying a glass salver on which were two pills of the elixir of immortality. Monkey was immediately suspicious of him, so he struck straight at his head with the iron cudgel, sending blood splattering out from brain and chest.

"Are you still as wild as this, you ape?" the shocked Bodhisattva asked. "He didn't steal your cassock, you didn't even know him, and he was no enemy of yours. Why kill him?"

"You may not know him, Bodhisattva," Monkey replied, "but he was a friend of the Black Bear Spirit.

Yesterday they and a white – clad scholar were sitting talking in front of the grassy mountainside. Today is the Black Spirit's birthday, and tomorrow he was coming to the 'Buddha's Robe Banquet'. That's why I recognized him. I'm sure that he was coming to greet that monster on his birthday."

"If that's the way it is, very well then," said the Bodhisattva. Monkey then went to lift up the Taoist to take a look at him, and he saw that he had been a grey wolf. There was an inscription under the glass salver that lay beside him. It read, "Made by Master Emptiness —reached" .

Brother Monkey laughed and sand, "What luck, what luck. This helps me and will save you trouble too, Bodhisattva. This monster has confessed of his own free will, and the other monster there can be finished off today."

"What do you mean?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"I have a saying," he replied, "that goes 'beat him at his own game'. Are you willing to let me do things my way?"

"Tell me about it," the Bodhisattva said.

"The two pills of immortality you see on that salver will be the present we take to visit him with," said Monkey, "and the words inscribed underneath— —'Made by Master Emptiness—reached'— —are the bait we'll set for him. If you do as I say, I have a plan for you that does not call for force or fighting. The fiend will collapse before our eyes, and the cassock will appear. If you won't let me have my way, then you go West, I'll go East, we can say good—bye to the Buddha's robe, and Sanzang will be up the creek."

"You've got a cheek, you ape," replied the Bodhisattva with a smile.

"No, no, I really have got a plan," Monkey protested.

"Tell me about it then," said Guanyin.

"You know it says on the salver, 'Made by Master Emptiness—reached,' Well, Master Emptiness—reached must be his name. Bodhisattva, if you're prepared to let me have my way, then change yourself into that Taoist. I shall eat one of those pills and then change myself into a pill, though I'll be a bit on the big side. You are to take the tray with the two pills on it and go to wish the fiend many happy returns. Give him the bigger of the pills, and when he's swallowed me, I'll take over inside him. If he doesn't hand the cassock over then, I'll weave a substitute out of his guts."

The Bodhisattva could only nod her agreement.

"What about it then?" said the laughing Monkey, and at this the

Bodhisattva in her great mercy used her unbounded divine power and her infinite capacity for transformation to control her will with her heart and her body with her will— —in an instant she turned into Master Emptiness—reached.

Chapter 17

The wind of immortality blew around his gown,

As he hovered, about to rise to emptiness.

His dark features were as ancient as a cypress,

His elegant expression unmatched in time.

Going and yet staying nowhere,

Similar but unique.

In the last resort all comes down to a single law,

From which he is only separated by an evil body.

"Great, great," exclaimed Brother Monkey at the sight. "Are you a Bodhisattva disguised as an evil spirit, or a Bodhisattva who really is an evil spirit?"

"Monkey," she replied with a laugh, "evil spirit and Bodhisattva are all the same in the last analysis— —they both belong to non—being." Suddenly enlightened by this, Monkey curled up and turned himself into a pill of immortality:

Rolling across the plate but not unstable,

Round and bright without any corners.

The double three was compounded by Ge Hong,

The double six was worked out by Shao Weng.

Pebbles of golden flame,

Pearls that shone in the daylight.

On the outside were lead and mercury,

But I cannot reveal the formula.

The pill he changed himself into was indeed a little larger than the other one. The Bodhisattva noted this and went with the glass salver to the entrance of the fiend's cave. Here she saw Chapter 17

Towering crags and lofty precipices,

Where clouds grow on the peaks;

Blue cypresses and green pines

Where the wind soughs in the forest.

On towering crags and lofty precipices

The devils come and go, and few men live.

The blue cypresses and green pines

Inspire Immortals to cultivate the hidden Way.

The mountains have gullies,

The gullies have springs,

Whose gurgling waters sing like a guitar,

Refreshing the ear.

Deer on its banks,

Cranes in the woods,

Where the reticent Immortal's pipe is casually played

To delight the heart.

Here an evil spirit can attain enlightenment,

And the boundless vow of the Buddha extends its mercy.

When the Bodhisattva saw this she thought, "If the beast has chosen this cave, there must be some hope for him." And from then on she felt compassion for him.

When she reached the entrance of the cave, the junior goblins at the gates greeted her with the words,

"Welcome, Immortal Elder Emptiness – reached." As some of them ran in to announce her, the monster came out of the gates to meet her and say, "Master Emptiness – reached, how good of you to put yourself to this trouble. This is an honour for me."

"Allow me to present you with this magic pill that, I venture to say, will confer immortality on you," the Bodhisattva replied. When the two of them had finished exchanging greetings they sat down, and the monster started to talk about the events of the previous day. The Bodhisattva quickly changed the subject by passing the salver to him and saying, "Please accept this token of my regard for you." She observed which was the bigger one and handed it to him with the words, "I wish Your Majesty eternal life."

Chapter 17

The monster handed the other pill to her and said, "I hope, Master Emptiness – reached, that you will share it with me." When they had finished declining politely, the fiend picked up the pill and was on the point of swallowing it when it went rolling into his mouth. Then Monkey resumed his true form and struck up some acrobatic postures, at which the fiend fell to the ground. The Bodhisattva too resumed her true form and asked the monster for the Buddha's cassock. As Monkey had now emerged through the monster's nostrils, she was worried that the evil spirit might misbehave again, so she threw a band over his head. He rose to his feet, ready to run them through with his spear, but Monkey and the Bodhisattva were already up in mid – air, where she began to recite the spell. As the monster's head began to ache, he dropped the spear and writhed in agony on the ground. The Handsome Monkey King collapsed with laughter in the sky, while the Black Bear Spirit rolled in torment on the earth.

"Beast, will you return to the truth now?" asked the Bodhisattva.

"I swear to, I swear to, if only you spare my life," the monster repeated

over and over again.

Monkey wanted to finish him off with no more ado, but the Bodhisattva stopped him at once: "Don't kill him — —I've got a use for him."

"What's the point in keeping that beast alive instead of killing him?" Monkey asked.

"I've got nobody to look after the back of my Potaraka Island," she replied, "so I shall take him back with me to be an island—guarding deity."

"You certainly are the all—merciful deliverer who doesn't allow a single soul to perish," said Monkey with a laugh. "If I knew a spell like that one of yours, I'd say it a thousand times over and finish off all the black bears I could find."

Although the bear spirit had come round and the spell had stopped, he was still in great pain as he knelt on the ground and begged pitifully, "Spare my life and I promise I'll return to the truth." The Bodhisattva descended in a ray of light, placed her hands on his head, and administered the monastic discipline to him; then she told him to take up his spear and accompany her. The black bear's evil intentions ceased from that day on, and his unbounded perversity came to an end.

"Sun Wukong," ordered the Bodhisattva, "go back now. Serve the Tang Priest well, don't be lazy, and don't start trouble."

"I'm very grateful to you for coming so far, Bodhisattva, and I must see you home," Monkey said. "That will not be necessary," she replied. Monkey took the cassock kowtowed to her, and departed. The Bodhisattva took Bear back to the sea, and there is a poem to prove it:

A magic glow shines round the golden image,

The thousand rays of glorious light.

She saves all men, giving of her pity,

Surveying the whole universe and revealing the golden lotus.

Chapter 17

Many shall now preach the scriptures' meaning,

Nor shall there be any flaw therein.

Subduing a demon and bringing him to truth, she returns to the sea;
The religion of Emptiness has recovered the brocade cassock.

If you don't know how things developed, listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

Chapter 18

The Tang Priest Is Rescued in the Guanyin Temple

The Great Sage Removes a Monster from Gao Village

Taking his leave of the Bodhisattva, Monkey brought his cloud in to land, hung the cassock on a *nanmu* tree, pulled out his cudgel, charged into the Black Wind Cave, and found not a single goblin inside. This was because the appearance of the Bodhisattva in her true form had so terrified them that they had fled in all directions. Evil thoughts welled up in Brother Monkey, and after piling dry firewood all around the multi–storied gate he set it alight, turning the Black Wind Cave into a Red Wind Cave. Then he went back to the North on a beam of magic light.

Sanzang, who had been anxiously waiting for him, was beginning to wonder why he had not come back. Had the Bodhisattva not come when asked to, or had Monkey just made up a story to escape? As he was being racked by these desperate thoughts, a shimmering cloud appeared in mid–air and Monkey came down and knelt before him.

"Master, here's the cassock," he announced, to Sanzang's great joy.

All the monks of the temple were delighted too, and they exclaimed, "Wonderful, wonderful, our lives are safe at last."

"Monkey," said Sanzang as he took the cassock from him, "when you set out this morning you reckoned that it would only take the length of a meal, or until midday at longest. Why have you only come back now, at sunset?" When Monkey gave him a full account of how he had asked the Bodhisattva to transform herself to subdue the monster, Sanzang set up an incense table and bowed low to the South. That done, he said,

"Disciple, now that we have the Buddha's robe, pack our luggage as quickly as you can."

"Not so fast, not so fast," Monkey replied. "It's already evening, too late to hit the road. Let's set out tomorrow morning."

The monks all knelt and said, "Lord Monkey is right. For one thing it's too late, and for another we made a vow. Now that all is well and the treasure has been recovered, we would like to carry out that vow and invite Your Lordships to share in the thanksgiving meal. Tomorrow morning we'll see you off on your way West."

"Yes, yes," urged Monkey. The monks then emptied their bags and produced everything that was left of what they had saved from the fire to make an offering of food. Then they burnt some paper to bring blessings and Chapter 18

recited some sutras to ward off disaster. The ceremonies were finished that evening.

The next morning the horse was curried and the luggage packed, and then they set out. The monks escorted them a long distance before turning back, after which Monkey led the way. It was now early spring.

The grass cushions the horse's hooves,

New leaves emerge from the willow's golden threads.

Apricot vies for beauty with peach;

The wild fig round the path is full of life.

On sun – warmed sandbanks sleep mandarin ducks;

In the flower – scented gully the butterflies are quiet.

After autumn, winter, and half of spring,

Who knows when the journey will end as they find the true word?

One evening, after they had been travelling along a desolate path for six or seven days, master and disciple saw a distant village. "Monkey,"

said Sanzang, "do you see the village not far over there? Let's go and ask them to put us up for the night; we can set off again tomorrow morning."

"Wait till I've made sure it's all right before deciding." Monkey replied, gazing at the village as his master pulled on the silken rein. He saw

Close—planted bamboo fences,

Many a thatched roof.

Outside the gates soar lofty trees;

Houses are mirrored in the waters under a bridge.

Green grow the willows beside the road,

Fragrant bloom the flowers in the gardens.

As sun sets in the West

Birds sing in the wooded hills.

The smoke of evening rises from the stoves

Along the paths roam sheep and cattle.

Well—fed chickens and pigs sleep under the eaves,

While the drunk old man sings his song next door.

When he had surveyed the scene, Brother Monkey said, "Go ahead, master. It's definitely a good village. We can spend the night there." Sanzang urged his horse forward, and in a few moments they were at the beginning of the main street. A young man appeared wearing a silken turban, a blue jacket, a pair of trousers tied at the ankles, and a pair of straw sandals. He was carrying an umbrella in his hand and a pack on his back. He was a fine sight as he walked briskly down the street. Monkey grabbed him and asked, "Where are you going? I want to ask you something— —where is this?"

The fellow, who was trying to break loose, shouted, "Why ask me? I'm not the only person in the village."

"Don't be angry, kind sir," replied Monkey, all smiles. "To help others is to help yourself. What harm can it do to tell me what the place is called? We might be able to bring your troubles to an end, you know." Struggle as he might, the fellow could not break loose, which made him leap around with fury.

"Damn it, damn it," he shouted, "I get more bullying from the old man than I can stand, and now I've got to run into you, baldy. You've got it in for me too."

"If you're good for anything, get out of my grip," Monkey said. "Do that and I'll let you go." The young man twisted and turned, but he could not break free— —it was as if he were held in a pair of pliers. In his temper he threw down his umbrella and his bundle, and tore at Monkey with both hands, trying to get hold of him.

Monkey was holding the luggage in one hand, and with the other he was keeping the young man under control, and no matter how hard the fellow tried he could not get a grip on him. Monkey, however, was now holding him more firmly than ever, and was bursting with fury.

"Monkey," Sanzang said, "here comes someone else you can ask. Why keep such a tight grip on him? Let him go."

"You don't understand, master," replied Monkey with a smile. "It would be no fun to ask anyone else. I have to ask him if there's to be anything to be got out of this." Seeing that Monkey would not let him go, the fellow started to talk.

"This is Old Gao Village in the country of Stubet, and it's called that because practically everyone here has the surname Gao. Now let me go."

"From your get—up, you're going on a long journey," Monkey went on. "Tell me where you're going and what you're up to, then I'll let you go."

The poor fellow had no option but to tell Monkey the truth. "I'm Gao Cai from the family of Squire Gao. His youngest daughter is twenty and not yet married, but three years ago an evil spirit came and took her. He's been staying with us for three years, and the old man isn't at all pleased. There's no future in having a girl marry an evil spirit, he says. It's ruining our family, and we don't get a family of in—laws to

visit. He's always wanted to get rid of the evil spirit, but he refuses to go. Now he's shut the girl up in the back building for the best part of a year, and he won't let any of the family see her. My old man gave me two ounces of silver and sent me to find a priest to capture the monster. I've been on the go for ages now, and asked three or four of

them, but they were all hopeless monks or pimples of Taoists— —none of them could control him. The old man's just been swearing at me as an utter idiot, given me five more ounces of silver as travelling expenses, and told me to find a good priest who'll deal with the monster. Then I was grabbed by you, you evil star, and that's made me later than ever. No wonder I shouted at you: I'm pushed around at home and pushed around when I go out. I never thought you'd be such a good wrestler that I wouldn't be able to break out of your clinch. Let me go now— —I've told you everything."

"You're in luck— —we're in the business," Monkey replied. "This is quite convenient; you needn't go any further or spend any of your money. We're not hopeless monks or pimples of Taoists. We've got some real magic powers, and we know how to deal with evil spirits. This'll do both of us a bit of good. Go back and tell the head of your household that my master is a saintly monk, and the younger brother of the Emperor of the East, who has sent him to visit the Buddha in the Western Heaven and seek the scriptures. We are very good at controlling devils and capturing monsters."

"Don't lie to me," the young man replied. "I've had enough of being pushed around. If you're tricking me, you haven't really got any special powers, and you can't capture that fiend, you'll only be getting me into more trouble than ever."

"I swear I'm not fooling you," answered Monkey. "Show us the way to your front door."

The young man saw that there was nothing for it but to pick up his bundle and umbrella, turn round, and take the two of them to his gate, where he said to them, "Reverend gentlemen, would you mind sitting here on the verandah for a moment while I go in and tell the master?" Only then did Monkey let go of him, put down the carrying —pole, take the horse's reins, and stand beside his master, who sat

down by the gate.

The young man went in through the gate and straight to the main hall, where he happened to meet Squire Gao.

"Well, you savage, who have you come back instead of going to find someone?" Squire Gao demanded.

Putting down his bundle and umbrella, the young man replied, "I must report to you, sir, that I had just got to the end of the street when I met a couple of monks. One was on horseback, and the other had a carrying—pole on his shoulder. He grabbed me and wouldn't let me go, and asked me where I was going. I refused to tell him several times, but he had me locked in a grip I couldn't get out of, so I had to tell him all about the mission you gave me, sir. He was absolutely delighted when he heard about it, and wanted to catch that monster for us."

"Where are they from?" Squire Gao asked. "He says that his master is a saintly monk, the younger brother of the Emperor of the East, who has sent him to visit the Buddha in the Western Heaven and seek the scriptures,"

the young man replied.

"But even if they're monks from far away, they may not really be capable of anything. Where are they now?"

"Waiting outside the gate."

The old man quickly put on his best clothes and went out with the youngster to greet them, addressing them as

"Venerable Elders." Sanzang turned hurriedly round when he heard this, and found them standing before him.

The older man was wearing a black silk turban, an onion—white robe of Sichuan brocade, a pair of calf—skin boots the color of unpolished rice, and a belt of black silk.

He came forward and said with a smile, "Greetings, Venerable Elders," as he bowed, holding his hands together. Sanzang returned his bow, but Monkey stood there immobile. At the sight of Brother Monkey's ugly face the old man decided not to bow to him.

Chapter 18

"Why won't you pay your respects to me?" Monkey asked, at which the old man, somewhat frightened, said to the young man, "You'll be the death of me, you little wretch. We've already got one hideous monster at home as a son—in—law we can't get rid of, so why ever did you have to bring this thunder god here to ruin us?"

"Gao, old chap, you've been living all these years for nothing——you've still got no sense. It's completely wrong to judge people by their faces. I may be no beauty, but I'm quite clever. I'll grab that evil spirit for you, catch that demon, seize your son—in—law, and give you back your daughter. I'll be doing you a good turn, so there's no need to fuss about my looks." The old man, now shaking with fear, pulled himself together and asked them in. Monkey took the horse's bridle, told the young man to carry the luggage, and went in with Sanzang. In his usual devil—may—care way he tethered the horse to one of the pillars of an open—air pavilion, pulled up a gleaming lacquered armchair, and told his master to sit down. Then he brought over a chair for himself and sat beside him.

"The younger venerable elder has already made himself at home," Squire Gao remarked.

"I'd feel at home here if you entertained us for six months," Brother Monkey replied.

When they were all seated the old man said, "The boy told me a moment ago that you were from the East."

"That's right," Sanzang replied. "The court has sent me to worship the Buddha in the Western Heaven and ask for the scriptures. As we are passing this way on our journey, we would like to spend the night here before continuing on our way tomorrow morning."

"If you two gentlemen just want to spend the night here, why all the talk about catching monsters?"

"As we'll be spending the night here," Monkey put in, "we though it would be fun to catch a few monsters while we're about it. May I ask how many there are in your residence?"

"Good heavens," the old man exclaimed, "however many do you want? We've only got this monster of a son—in—law, and he's ruined our

lives."

"Tell me all about this monster from the beginning," Monkey said. "I must know about his magic powers if I'm to capture him for you."

"This village has never had any trouble from ghosts, demons or evil spirits before. It was my misfortune to have no son, and three daughters, of whom the eldest is called Fragrant Orchid, the second Jade Orchid, and the third Blue Orchid. The other two were betrothed to men from the village when they were children and have been married off. I wanted the third to marry a man who would live here to support—me in my old age, look after the household, and do jobs about the place. About three years ago a good-looking young fellow turned up who said that his name was Zhu and he came from the Mountain of Blessing. He told me that he had no parents or brothers, and wanted to marry and live with his in-laws. As he had no family commitments I offered him my daughter's hand, old fool that I am, and from the moment he became a member of our family he worked very hard. He ploughed and hoed without using oxen or tools; and he didn't need a scythe or a stick to harvest the crops. As day followed day, there was nothing wrong with him, except that he started to look different."

"How?" Monkey asked.

"At first he was a plump, dark chap, but later on he became a long-nosed, big-eared idiot with thick black hairs running down from the back of his head and a great, thick body. His face is just like a pig's. His appetite is enormous, too. He needs several bushels of grain at every main meal, and over a hundred griddle-cakes for Chapter 18

breakfast. Luckily he is a vegetarian. If he ate meat and wine he would have ruined us in six months."

"He has to eat so much because he works so hard," Sanzang commented.

"But that's not the main thing." Squire Gao continued. "He can also summon up a wind, make clouds and mist come and go, and send pebbles and sand flying. He's terrified our neighbors, who don't feel safe living here any longer! He's shut my daughter away in the building at the back, and nobody's seen her for six months. We don't

even know if she's still alive. That is how we know he's an evil monster, and why we want a priest to come and get rid of him."

"No difficulty there," Monkey replied. "Don't worry, old chap, I guarantee that I'll get him tonight, make him write out a document divorcing your daughter, and bring her back to you. What do you say to that?"

"Because I thought there'd be no harm in offering him my daughter, I've ruined my reputation and estranged all my relations," Squire Gao replied. "If you can catch him, why bother with a divorce document? Wipe him out for me, if you please."

"Easy, easy," said Monkey. "I'll get him tonight."

The old man was delighted. He had a table and chairs set out and wiped clean, and a vegetarian meal brought in. When the meal was over and he was about to go to bed, the old man asked, "What weapons and how many men will you need? I'll get everything ready in good time."

"I have a weapon," Monkey replied.

"You two gentlemen only have your monastic staves— —how will you be able to kill the fiend with them?" the old man asked. Monkey produced the embroidery needle from his ear, held it between his fingers, and shook it in the wind. It turned into the gold—banded cudgel as thick as a rice—bowl. Monkey turned to Squire Gao and asked, "How does this cudgel compare with the weapons you have in here? Will it do to kill the monster?"

"So you have the weapon," the old man went on, "but what about the men?"

"I can do it single—handed." Monkey replied, "though I would like a few respectable old gentlemen to come in and keep my master company while I'm away from him. When I've captured the monster they can witness his confession before I wipe him out for you." The old man thereupon sent his servants to ask a few old friends over, and before long they had all arrived. When the introductions were over Monkey said, "Master, you sit here and don't worry. I'm off."

Just watch Monkey as with his cudgel in his hand he takes hold of the old man and says, "Take me to the building at the back. I want to see where this evil spirit lives." Squire Gao led him to the door of the back building, and Monkey told him to bring the key at once. "Look here,"

the old man answered, "if a key would have done the trick, I wouldn't have had to ask for your services."

"Can't you tell at your age when someone's joking?" Monkey asked. "I was only teasing. You shouldn't have taken me seriously." He felt the lock and found that molten copper had been poured into it, so he struck it a vicious blow with his cudgel and shattered it. Pushing the doors open, he saw that it was pitch – black inside.

"Call your daughter's name, Old Gao, to see whether she's in here," he said.

The old man summoned up his courage and called her name, and the daughter, recognizing her father's voice, answered feebly, "Dad, I'm in here." With a roll of his golden pupils Monkey peered into the darkness to take Chapter 18

a closer look at her. Do you know what she was like?

Her cloudy hair was tangled and unkempt,

Her face was filthy and unwashed.

Her orchid heart was as pure as ever,

But her beauty lay in ruins.

There was no blood or life in her cherry lips,

And her limbs were crooked and bent.

A sad frown on her forehead,

Her eyebrows pale;

Weak and frightened,

Only daring to whisper.

When she came out and saw her father, she grabbed hold of him, put her hand round his head, and wept.

"Don't cry," Monkey said, "don't cry. Where has the monster gone?"

"I don't know. These days he's been setting out at dawn and only coming back in the middle of the night.

There's always so much cloud and mist that I can't tell where he goes. He knows that my father wants to exorcise him, so he's always on the alert. That's why he comes back late and leaves at dawn."

"Of course he would," Monkey remarked, adding, "old fellow, take the girl to the front building. You two can have a good long talk; I'm going to wait for the monster here. Don't be surprised if he doesn't turn up; but if he does, I'll wipe him out for you." The old man happily took his daughter to the front building.

Monkey then used some of his magic powers to turn himself into the likeness of the girl with a shake of his body. Then he sat down in the room to wait for the evil spirit. Before long there was a marvellous wind that sent stones and dust flying:

At first it was a gentle breeze,

That gradually became a tremendous gale.

When it was a gentle breeze, it filled Heaven and Earth;

When it grew, nothing could withstand it.

It stripped off flowers and snapped willows like stalks of hemp,
Uprooting forests as if it were picking vegetables.

It threw rivers and seas into turmoil, to the fury of gods and devils,
Splitting rocks and mountains as Heaven and Earth watched in horror.

The flower – eating deer lost their way,

The fruit – plucking monkeys did not know where they were.

Seven – storied iron pagodas fell on the Buddha's head,

The streamers in the temple fell on the jeweled canopy.

Golden beams and pillars of jade were shaken from their roots, Tiles

flew from the roof like swallows.

As the boatman raised his oar he made a vow,

Quickly sacrificing a pig and a goat as he pushed off.

The guardian god of the city ward abandoned his shrine,

The Dragon Kings of the Four Seas bowed to Heaven.

The yaksha demons' boats were wrecked on the coast,

And half the length of the Great Wall was blown down.

As this gale wind passed, an evil spirit appeared in mid–air. He was certainly ugly with his dark face, stubbly hair, long nose, and big ears. He wore a cotton tunic that was somewhere between black and blue, and round his waist was a patterned cotton cloth. "So that's what he's like," thought Monkey with a secret smile, and without greeting him or asking him anything he lay down on the bed, breathing heavily and pretending to be ill. Not knowing who this really was, the monster came straight in, put his arms around him and was going to kiss him.

Monkey laughed to himself again as he thought, "So he really wants to screw me." Then he thrust his hand up under the monster's long nose to throw him off balance. The monster fell off the bed.

Chapter 18

As the monster pulled himself up he leaned on the edge of the bed and said, "Darling, why are you so angry with me today? Is it because I'm late?"

"I'm not angry," Monkey replied, "not angry at all."

"If you're not angry with me, why did you make me fall over?"

"You should have been more thoughtful and not tried hugging me and kissing me. I'm not feeling very well today. If I'd been my usual self I'd have been waiting for you at the door. Take your clothes off and come to bed." Not realizing what he was up to, the monster undressed. Monkey jumped out of bed and sat on the pot as the monster went back to bed and groped around without finding the girl.

"Where've you gone, darling?" he asked. "Take your clothes off and come to bed."

"Go to sleep," Monkey replied, "I'm taking a shit." The monster did as he was told. Monkey sighed and said,

"What terrible luck."

"What are you so fed up about?" the monster asked. "What do you mean by 'terrible luck'? I may have eaten some food and drunk some tea since marrying you, but I haven't been idle either. I've swept for your family and dug ditches, I've shifted bricks and tiles, I've built walls for you, I've ploughed and weeded your fields, I've sown your wheat, and I've transplanted your rice. I've made your family's fortune. These days you dress in brocade and have golden pins in your hair. You have fruit and flowers in all four seasons, and vegetables for the pot throughout the year. But despite this you're still not satisfied, groaning and moaning like that and complaining about your 'terrible luck.'"

"I didn't mean that," Monkey replied. "Today I could hear my parents through the wall. They were smashing up bricks and tiles and pretending to curse and beat me."

"Why should they want to do that?" the monster asked.

"They said that since we married and you became their resident son—in—law, all respectability has gone by the board. They were complaining about having such an ugly fellow as you around, and about never meeting any brother—in—law or other relations of yours. Besides, with all that wind and cloud whenever you come in or go out, they wonder who on earth you can be and what you are called. You're ruining their reputation, and disgracing the family. That's why they were so angry that they went through the motions of beating and cursing me."

"I may be a bit of an eyesore," the monster said, "but if you want me to be a good—looker I can fix that without any difficulty. When I first came I had a word with your father, and he agreed to the marriage of his own free will. Why is he talking like this now?" My home is the Cloud Pathway Cave on the Mount of Blessing. My surname, Zhu, is like my face——piggy——and my correct name is Zhu Ganglie, Iron—Haired pig.

You tell them all that if they ask you again.

"He's an honest monster," thought Monkey with delight. "If he came out with all this without being tortured.

Now I know who he is and where he's from, I'm sure I can catch him."

"He's sent for a priest to come and catch you," Monkey said aloud.

"Come to bed, come to bed, and forget about him," the monster said with a laugh. "I can do as many transformations as the Plough, and I have my nine – pronged rake too, so what have I to fear from priests, monks or Taoists? Even if your old man were holy enough to summon the Demon – destroying Patriarch down Chapter 18

from the Ninth Heaven, he's an old friend of mine and wouldn't do anything to harm me."

"My father said that he'd asked that fellow by the name of Sun, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who made such trouble up in the Heavenly Palace some five hundred years ago, to come and capture you."

The monster was somewhat taken aback on hearing this name, and said, "In that case I'm off. We're through."

"You can't just go like that," said Monkey.

"You wouldn't know," the monster replied, "but that Protector of the Horses who made such trouble in the Heavenly Palace is quite a fighter. I might not be able to beat him, and that would spoil my good name." With these words he pulled on his clothes, opened the door, and was just going out when Monkey grabbed him, gave his own face a rub, and changed back into his real form.

"Where d'you think you're going, my fine monster?" he roared, adding, "take a look and see who I am." The monster turned round and saw Monkey's protruding teeth, pinched face, fiery eyes with golden pupil, bald head and hairy face. At the sight of this thunder god incarnate his hands were numbed and his legs paralyzed; then with a great tearing sound he broke free, ripping his clothes, and escaped in the form of a hurricane.

Monkey rushed after him, grabbed his iron cudgel, and took a swipe

at the wind. The monster then changed into ten thousand sparks and went straight back to his mountain. Monkey mounted his cloud and went after him shouting, "Where d'you think you're going? If you go up to Heaven, I'll chase you as far as the Dipper and Bull Palace, and if you go into the Earth, I'll pursue you as far as the Hell of the Unjustly Slain."

Goodness! If you don't know how far he chased the monster, or who won in the end, listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

Chapter 19

In the Cloud Pathway Cave Sun Wukong Wins over Zhu Bajie

On Pagoda Mountain Xuanzang Receives *the Heart Sutra*

The monster shot forward as a stream of sparks, with the Great Sage behind him on his coloured cloud. As he was racing along, Monkey saw a tall mountain appear in front of them. Here the monster put himself together again by reassembling the sparks, rushed into a cave, and came out with a nine–pronged rake in his hand to do battle.

"Wretch," shouted Monkey, "where are you from? How do you know my name, you evil demon? What powers have you got? Tell me honestly, and I'll spare your life."

"You don't know what I can do," the monster replied. "Come a little nearer and stand still while I tell you: I was born stupid,

An idler and a slacker.

I never nourished my nature or cultivated the truth,

But spent my time in primal ignorance.

Then I happened to meet a true Immortal,

Who sat down with me and chatted about the weather,

Advised me to reform and not to sink among mortals,

For taking life was a heinous sin.

One day, when my life came to an end,

It would be too late to regret the punishments in store.

His words moved me to seek reform,

And my heart longed for miraculous spells.

I was lucky enough to have him as my teacher;

He showed me the gates of Heaven and Earth.

He taught me the Nine Changes and the Great Return of Cinnabar, As we worked by night and day with never a break.

It reached up to the Mud Ball Palace in my head,

And down to the Bubbling Spring in my feet.

The circulating magic liquid reached the Flowery Pool under my tongue, And the Cinnabar Field in my abdomen was given extra warmth.

The Babe, lead, and the Girl, mercury, were married,

And combining together, they divided into sun and moon.

The Dragon and the Tiger were harmonized,

The Sacred Tortoise drank the Golden Crow's blood.

The Three Flowers gathered at the top and returned to the root.

The Five Essences faced the Origin and flowed in all directions.

When their work was done, I could fly,

And the Immortals of Heaven came in pairs to greet me.

Coloured clouds grew beneath my feet,

As I faced Heavenly Palace gates with a body light and strong.

The Jade Emperor gave a banquet for all the Immortals,

And all lined up according to their grades.

I was made Field Marshal in charge of the Milky Way,

Commanding all the sailors on that river in the sky.

When the Queen Mother gave a Peach Banquet,

She invited many guests to the Jade Pool.

As drunkenness clouded my mind that day,

I lurched and staggered around.

As I charged in drunken pride into the Cool Broad Palace

I was greeted by an exquisite immortal maiden.

At the sight of her beauty my soul was captivated,

And I could not repress my mortal passions of old.

Losing all sense of rank and dignity,

I seized the beauty and asked her to sleep with me.

Three times, four times she refused,

Dodging and trying to hide in her distress.

Great was the courage of my lust, and I roared like thunder,

All but shaking down the gates of heaven.

The Miraculous Inspecting Officer reported to the Jade Emperor, And from that day I was doomed.

The Cool Broad Palace was closely surrounded.

I could neither advance nor retreat: escape was impossible.

Then I was arrested by the gods,

But as I was still drunk I was not scared.

And, after questioning, sentenced to death.

Luckily the Great White Planet

Stepped forward, bowed low, and interceded.

My sentence was commuted to two thousand strokes of the heavy rod,
Which tore my flesh and all but smashed my bones.

I was released alive and expelled from Heaven,

So I tried to make a living on the Mount of Blessing.

For my sins I was reborn from the wrong womb,

And now I am known as Iron—haired Pig."

"So you are an earthly reincarnation of Marshal Tian Peng," said Brother Monkey when he heard this. "No wonder you knew my name."

"Ha," the monster snorted angrily. "Your insane rebellion caused trouble for very many of us, Protector of the Horses. Have you come here to throw your weight around again? I'll teach you some manners. Take this!"

Monkey was in no mood to spare him after this, and he struck at the monster's head with his cudgel. The pair of them fought a magnificent midnight battle on that mountainside: Monkey's golden pupils flashed with lightning;

The monster's glaring eyes sparked silver.

One disgorged coloured mist,

The other breathed out red clouds.

The red clouds lit up the night;

The coloured mists illuminated the darkness.

A gold – banded cudgel,

A nine – toothed rake,

And two splendid heroes.

One a Great Sage down among the mortals,

The other a marshal banished from Heaven.

Chapter 19

One had been stripped of his honors and become a monster,

The other had been saved when he took service with a priest.

When the rake attacked, it was like a dragon stretching its claws; The cudgel blocked it as nimbly as a phoenix flying through flowers.

Pig said,

"In wrecking my marriage your crime is as great as parricide."

Monkey replied,

"You deserve to be arrested for raping that young girl."

Amid these exchanges

And wild shouts,

The cudgel and the rake crossed and clashed.

They fought each other till the day began to dawn,

And the monster's arms were tired right out.

They fought from the second watch of the night until the sky began to grow light in the East. The monster, no longer able to resist his enemy, broke away and fled, turning himself into a hurricane again. He went straight back to his cave, shut the gates behind him, and did not come out. Monkey saw a stone tablet outside the cave on which was inscribed CLOUD PATHWAY CAVE. The monster did not come out again and it was now broad daylight, so Monkey thought that as

his master might be waiting for him he had better go back to see him. He could come back later to catch the monster. He gave his cloud a kick and was back in Old Gao Village in an instant.

Sanzang, meanwhile, had been talking all night with the elders about things ancient and modern, and had not slept a wink. Just as he was beginning to think that Brother Monkey would not come back, Monkey appeared in the courtyard, put away his iron club, straightened his clothes, and entered the main room.

"Master, I'm here," he announced, giving the old men such a surprise that they all fell to their knees and thanked him for his efforts.

"You've been out all night, Monkey," Sanzang said. "Where did you catch that evil spirit?"

"He's no common or garden ghost, master," Monkey replied, "and he isn't an ordinary wild animal turned monster. He is Marshal Tian Peng, who was exiled to the mortal world. As he was placed in the wrong womb he has a face like a wild boar, but he's still kept his original divine nature. He says that he takes his name from his looks and is called Zhu Ganglie, Iron-haired Pig. I was going to kill him in the building at the back, but he turned into a hurricane and fled. When I struck at this wind, he changed into sparks, went straight back to his cave, came out with a nine-pronged rake, and fought me all night. He broke off the engagement in terror as the dawn broke and shut himself in his cave. I was going to smash down the gates and have it out with him, but then it occurred to me that you might be worried after waiting for me so long, so I came back to put you in the picture first."

After Monkey had made his report, Squire Gao came up and knelt before him saying, "Venerable sir, I'm afraid that although you've chased him away, he'll come back after you've gone; so this is no real solution.

Please, I beg of you, catch him for me and exterminate him to prevent trouble later. I promise you that I shall not be remiss if you do this for me, and there will, of course, be rich rewards. I shall write a deed, witnessed by my relations and friends, giving you half of my property

and my land. Please, please eradicate this evil weed and save the honour of the family."

"You've got no sense of what's proper, old man," replied Monkey with a grin. "He told me that although he may have put away a lot of your rice and tea, he's also done you a lot of good. You've piled up a lot of wealth in the past few years, all thanks to his efforts. He says he hasn't been eating your food in idleness, and wants to know why you're trying to have him exorcised. He maintains that he is a heavenly Immortal come down to earth who has been working for your family and has never harmed your daughter. I would say that he is a very fitting son—in—law for you, who does your family's name no harm. You really ought to keep him."

"Venerable sir," the old man replied, "he may never have done anything wicked, but it does our reputation no good to have a son—in—law like him. Whether he does anything or not, people say that the Gaos have asked a monster to marry into the family, and I simply can't bear to hear a thing like that."

"Go and have it out with him, and then we'll see what to do," said Sanzang.

"I'll try a trick on him this time," Monkey replied. "I guarantee to bring him back this time for you to look at.

But don't be angry with him."

"Old Gao," he continued, addressing the old man, "look after my master well. I'm off."

By the time the words were out of his mouth, he had disappeared. He leapt up the mountain and smashed the gates of the cave to splinters with a single blow of his cudgel, shouting, "Come out and fight Monkey, you chaff—guzzling moron." The monster, who had been snoring inside, heard the gates being smashed and the insulting "chaff—guzzling moron," and went wild with fury.

Seizing his rake and summoning up his spirit, he rushed out and shrieked, "You shameless Protector of the Horses. What have I ever done to you to make you smash down my gates? You'd better take a look at the statute book: there's the death penalty for breaking and entering."

"You fool," laughed Monkey, "I've got a very good justification for smashing your gates——you abducted a girl by force, without

matchmakers or witnesses, and without giving proper presents or observing the right Chapter 19

ceremonies. You're a fine one to talk about who deserves to have his head cut off."

"Stop talking such nonsense and see how this rake of mine strikes you," the monster replied.

Blocking the blow with his cudgel, Monkey retorted, "Is that the rake you used when you were tilling the fields and growing vegetables for the Gaos as their hired hand? What's so wonderful about it that I should be afraid of you?"

"You don't realize that it's no ordinary weapon," the monster replied. "You'd better listen while I tell you about it:

This was refined from divine ice—iron,

Polished till it gleamed dazzling white,

Hammered by Lord Lao Zi himself,

While Ying Huo fed the fire with coal—dust.

The Five Emperors of the Five Regions applied their minds to it, The Six Dings and Six jias went to great efforts.

They made nine teeth of jade,

Cast a pair of golden rings to hang beneath them,

Decorated the body with the Six Bright Shiners and the Five planets, Designed it in accordance with the Four Seasons and the Eight Divisions.

The length of top and bottom match Heaven and Earth.

Positive and Negative were to left and right, dividing the sun and moon.

The Six Divine Generals of the Oracular Lines are there, following the Heavenly Code; The constellations of the Eight Trigrams are set out in

order.

It was named the Supremely Precious Gold – imbued Rake,

And served to guard the gates of the Jade Emperor's palace.

As I had become a great Immortal,

I now enjoyed eternal life,

And was commissioned as Marshal Tian Peng,

With this rake to mark my imperial office.

When I raise it, fire and light stream forth;

When I lower it, a snowy blizzard blows.

It terrifies the Heavenly Generals,

And makes the King of Hell too quake with fear.

There is no other weapon matching it on Earth,

Nor iron to rival it throughout the world.

It changes into anything I like,

And leaps about whenever I say the spell.

For many a year I've carried it around,

Keeping it with me every single day.

I will not put it down even to eat,

Nor do I when I sleep at night.

I took it with me to the Peach Banquet,

And carried it into the celestial court.

When I sinned my sin in drunken pride,

I used it to force compliance with my evil will.

When Heaven sent me down to the mortal dust,

I committed all kinds of wickedness down here.

I used to devour people in this cave,

Until I fell in love and married in Gao Village.

This rake has plunged beneath the sea to stir up dragons,

And climbed high mountains to smash up tigers' dens.

No other blade is worth a mention

Besides my rake, the sharpest weapon ever.

To win a fight with it requires no effort;

Of course it always brings me glory.

Even if you have an iron brain in a brazen head and a body of steel,
This rake will scatter your souls and send your spirit flying."

Monkey put his cudgel away and replied, "Stop shooting your mouth off, you idiot. I'm now sticking my head out for you to hit. Let's see you scatter my souls and send my spirits flying." The monster raised his rake and brought it down with all his might, but although flames leapt forth, it did not even scratch Monkey's scalp.

The monster's arms and legs turned to jelly with fright as he exclaimed, "What a head, what a head."

"You wouldn't know," Monkey replied. "When I was captured by the Little Sage for wrecking the Heavenly Palace, stealing the pills of immortality and the heavenly peaches, and filching the imperial wine, I was marched to a place outside the Dipper and Bull Palace, where all the gods of Heaven hacked at me with axes, hit me with maces, cut at

me with swords, stabbed at me with daggers, tried to burn me with lightning, and pounded me with thunder; but none of it hurt me in the slightest. Then I was taken off by the Great High Lord Lao and put in the Eight Trigrams Furnace, where I was refined with divine fire, so that my eyes are now fiery, my pupils golden, my head brazen, and my shoulders of iron. If you don't believe me, try a few more blows to see whether you can hurt me or not."

"I remember you, you baboon," the monster replied. "When you made trouble in Heaven, you lived in the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in the land of Aolai in the Continent of Divine Victory. I haven't heard of you for a very long time. What brings you here, and why are you bullying me in front of my own gates? Surely my father–in–law didn't go all that way to ask you to come here?"

"No," said Monkey, "he didn't. I have turned away from evil and been converted to good. I have given up Taoism and become a Buddhist. I am protecting the Patriarch Sanzang, the younger brother of the Great Tang Emperor, on his journey to the Western Heaven to visit the Buddha and ask for the scriptures. We happened to ask for a night's lodging when we came to Gao Village, and in the course of our conversation Old Gao asked me to rescue his daughter and capture you, you chaff–guzzling moron."

The monster dropped his rake to the ground, chanted a respectful "na–a–aw," and said, "Where's this pilgrim?

Please take me to meet him."

"What do you want to see him for?" Monkey asked.

"Guanyin converted me and told me to obey the monastic rules and eat vegetarian food here till I could go with that pilgrim, the one who's going to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and ask for the scriptures. I'll be able to make up for my sins through this good deed, and win a good reward. I've been waiting for him for years, but there's been no news of him till now. If you're a disciple of his, why didn't you say something about fetching the scriptures before, instead of making this vicious attack on me in my own home?"

"This had better not be a trick to soften me up and make me let you get away," said Monkey. "If you really want to protect the Tang Priest and you aren't trying to kid me, then you'd better make a vow to Heaven, and I'll take you to meet my master." The monster fell to his

knees with a thud, and kowtowed to the sky so often that he looked like a rice pestle.

Chapter 19

279

Journey to the West

"Amitabha Buddha," he cried out, "if I'm not completely sincere, cut me up into ten thousand bits for breaking the laws of Heaven."

After hearing him swear this oath, Monkey said, "Very well then, now light a brand and burn this place of yours out. If you do that, I'll take you." The monster piled up some reeds and brambles, lit a brand, and set the Cloud Pathway Cave on fire; it burned as well as a brick kiln that has got out of control. "I've no second thoughts," he said, "so please take me to see him."

"Give me that rake of yours," Monkey ordered, and the monster obediently handed it over. Monkey then plucked out a hair, blew on it with magic breath, and shouted, "Change!" It turned into three lengths of hempen rope, with which he bound the monster's hands behind his back; the monster docilely put his hands there and let Monkey tie him up. Then Monkey seized him by the ear and led him off with the words, "Quick march."

"Take it easy," the monster pleaded. "You're pulling so hard you're hurting my ear."

"Can't be done," Monkey replied. "Can't show you any favours. As the old saying has it, 'even a good pig must be handled roughly.' Wait until you've seen my master. If you really are sincere, you'll be released then." The two of them went back through cloud and mist to Gao Village, and there is a poem to prove it: The Golden Vajra is stronger than Wood,

The Mind Ape could bring the Wooden Dragon to submission.

When Metal obeyed and Wood was tamed they were at one;

When Wood was loving and Metal kind they worked together.

One host and one guest with nothing to keep them apart,

With the three in harmony they had a mysterious power.

Nature and feelings both rejoiced as they joined in the Supreme Principle; They both promised without reservation to go to the West.

In a moment they were back at the village. Holding the monster's rake in one hand and twisting his ear with the other, he said, "Do you know who that is sitting up straight in the main hall? It's my master."

When Old Gao and all his friends and relations saw Monkey coming, tugging the bound monster by his ear, they all came into the courtyard and said happily, "Venerable sir, this is the son—in—law all right." The monster went forward, fell to his knees, and kowtowed to Sanzang with his hands behind his back.

"Master," he shouted, "Your disciple failed to welcome you. Had I known, master, that you were staying in my father—in—law's house, I'd have come to greet you and do homage, and I'd have been saved all this agony."

"How did you make him submit and come to pay homage?" Sanzang asked Monkey.

Monkey then let the monster go, hit him with the handle of the rake, and yelled, "Tell him, fool." The monster then told Sanzang all about how he had been converted by the Bodhisattva.

Sanzang was so pleased that he asked Squire Gao for an incense table to be brought, which was done at once.

Sanzang then washed his hands, burnt incense, bowed low to the South, and said, "Thanks be to the Bodhisattva for her divine grace." The elders also burnt incense and bowed low in worship. When this was done, Sanzang took the seat of honour in the hall and told Monkey to untie the monster. Monkey shook himself to take his hairs back, and the ropes untied themselves. The monster bowed to Sanzang once more and vowed to go to the West with him. Then he bowed to Monkey as his elder brother because he had joined first, addressing him as "elder brother" from then on. "If you wish to earn a good reward by going with me as my disciple, I'll give you a Buddhist name to call you by."

"Master," he replied, "When the Bodhisattva laid her hands upon my head and told me to obey the prohibitions, she gave me a Buddhist name— —Zhu Wuneng, Pig Awakened to Power."

"Wonderful, wonderful," said Brother Monkey with a smile, "I'm called Wukong, Awakened to Emptiness, and you're called Awakened to Power. That makes us members of the same sect in the Buddhist faith."

"Master," said Pig, "I have been instructed by the Bodhisattva and I never eat the five stinking foods and the three forbidden meats— —wild goose, dog, and snakehead. I've eaten vegetarian food in my father—in—law's house and never touched the stinking foods; but now that I have met you, master, I'm freed from these restrictions."

"You are not," Sanzang replied. "You are not to eat the five stinking foods and the three forbidden meats, and I'm giving you another name: Eight Prohibitions, or Bajie."

"I shall obey my master's command," the moron happily replied, and from then on he was known as Zhu Bajie, or Eight Prohibitions Pig.

Squire Gao was happier than ever to see that he had turned from evil to good, and he ordered his servants to set out banquet with which to thank the Tang Priest. Pig went over to Squire Gao, tugged at his coat, and said,

"Sir, may my wife come out and pay her respects to these two gentlemen?"

"Brother," said Monkey with a laugh. "You've entered the church now and become a monk. Don't ever talk about a wife again. Only Taoist priests can have families— —we Buddhist monks never marry. Let's all sit down and eat a vegetarian meal, then we can set off early tomorrow morning on our journey to the West." Squire Gao had the table and chairs set out and asked Sanzang take the seat of honour. Monkey and Pig sat on his left and right, and all the relations sat below them. Squire Gao opened a pot of wine, from which he filled a cup and poured a libation to Heaven and Earth before handing it to Sanzang.

"Frankly, sir," Sanzang said, "I have been a vegetarian from the womb, and have not consumed strong—flavoured food since my earliest childhood."

"Venerable master, I know that you are a vegetarian," Squire Gao replied, "which is why I haven't pressed any meat or strong—flavoured

food upon you. But this wine is made from vegetable matter, so a cup of it will do no harm."

"I don't drink either," Sanzang explained, "as alcohol is the first of the prohibitions of the priesthood."

"Master," pig hastily interjected, "I may be a vegetarian, but I haven't given up liquor."

"And although I haven't strong head for the stuff and can't finish a whole jar of it, I haven't given it up either,"

Monkey added.

"In that case you two had better drink some; but don't get drunk and ruin everything," said Sanzang. The pair of them then took the first cup, after which everyone sat down again as the vegetarian dishes were brought in.

Words could not describe the flowing cups, the well–filled dishes, and the splendid food.

When master and disciples had eaten, Squire Gao brought pieces of gold and silver to the weight of two hundred ounces on a red lacquer tray and offered them to the three pilgrims to help with the expenses of their journey. Then he produced three brocade–collared gowns that could serve as overcoats. "We are mendicant monks," said Sanzang, "Who beg for our food in the villages and other places through which we pass, so we could not possibly accept gold, silver, or cloth."

Monkey then marched up and grabbed a handful of the money. Then he addressed the young man Gao Cai.

"Yesterday," he said, "I troubled you to lead my master here, and today he has recruited another disciple, but we have been unable to show our gratitude. So take these pieces of gold and silver as your fee for guiding us, and buy yourself a pair of straw sandals. If you have any more evil spirits in future, and you help us again, we'll be able to show even more appreciation." The young man Gao Cai took the gold

and silver, then kowtowed to express his thanks.

"If you won't take gold or silver," Squire Gao said, "please be good enough to accept these rough clothes as a mark of our gratitude."

"If we monks accepted a single thread, we would have to atone for it for a thousand ages," replied Sanzang.

"It will suffice if we take the pancakes and fruit that we haven't eaten with us as provisions for the journey."

"Master, elder brother," said Pig, who was standing beside them, "it's all right for you two to refuse them, but I was a son—in—law in this family for several years, and I deserves three bushels of grain to take with me. On yes, father—in—law, my tunic was torn by elder brother yesterday and my shoes have split, so please give me a black brocade cassock and a good pair of new shoes." Old Squire Gao, who could scarcely refuse this request, gave him the new shoes and a tunic in exchange for his old ones.

Pig swaggered over to Old Gao, chanted a "na—a—aw" of respect, and said, "Please inform my mother—in—law, my sisters—in—law, my brothers—in—law, and my uncles that I have become a monk today, and ask them to excuse me for not saying good—bye to them in person. Father—in—law, look after my wife well. If we don't get the scriptures, I'll go back to lay life and work for you as a son—in—law again."

"Moron," shouted Monkey, "stop talking nonsense."

"I'm doing nothing of the sort," Pig replied, "I am thinking that if things go wrong I'd be wasting my time as a monk, and my wife's marriage would have been ruined, both for nothing."

"Enough of your idle chatter," said Sanzang, "let's be on our way at once." Their luggage was hung from a carrying—pole on pig's shoulders. When the white horse was saddled, Sanzang mounted it, and Monkey led the way with his iron cudgel over his shoulder. Thus the three of them left Squire Gao, his relations, and his friends, and headed West. There is a pome to prove it that goes: The trees tower above the misty earth

Chapter 19

As the Tang disciples of Buddha toil and suffer.

When hungry, they beg their food from a thousand homes;

When cold they wear cloaks with a thousand patches.

Do not allow the Thought – horse to run wild,

And don't let the stubborn Mind – ape howl at will.

With passions stilled and one's nature firm, all destinies are in harmony; When the full moon of contemplation is reached, you will be pure.

After travelling peacefully Westwards for a month, the three of them left the territory of Stubet and saw a mountain soaring up above their heads. Sanzang stopped whipping his horse on, reined him in, and said,

"Monkey, Monkey, that's a high mountain in front of us, so please go and reconnoiter it."

"No need," said Pig. "It's called Pagoda Mountain, and there's a Rook's Nest Hermit who cultivates his conduct on it. I've met him."

"What does he do?" Sanzang asked.

"He has some powers," Pig replied. "He once invited me to cultivate my conduct with him, but I didn't go." As master and disciples talked they were soon on the mountain. It was a splendid mountain at that: South of it were blue pines and verdant locust trees,

To the North were green willows and red peach – blossom.

Cawing noisily,

The wild birds talked to each other;

Soaring gracefully,

The cranes flew together.

Rich in fragrance

Were the thousands of different flowers;

Softly dark

Were the endless kinds of herbs.

In the gullies were bubbling green streams,

Chapter 19

283

Journey to the West

The crags were wreathed in auspicious cloud.

It was indeed a scene of rare and elegant beauty.

Lonely, where no man came or went.

As the master surveyed the scene from his horse he noticed a grass hut in front of a fragrant locust tree. To the left of it were David's—deer with flowers in their mouths, and to the right were monkeys holding offerings of fruit, while phoenixes of many colours wheeled around the top of the tree, in which cranes and golden pheasants had gathered. Pig pointed and said, "That's the Rook's Nest Hermit." Sanzang gave his horse the rein, whipped it on, and went straight to the foot of the tree.

When the hermit saw the three of them coming he jumped down from his bird's nest. Sanzang dismounted and bowed to him, and only then the hermit reply, helping him up, "Please arise, holy priest. I'm sorry I did not welcome you properly."

"Greetings, venerable hermit," said Pig.

"Aren't you the Iron—haired Pig from the Mount of Blessing? How have you had the great good fortune of travelling with a holy monk?"

"Last year," replied Pig, "I was converted by the Bodhisattva Guanyin, and I swore that I'd go with him as his disciple."

"Wonderful, wonderful," exclaimed the delighted hermit, who then pointed at Monkey and asked, "Who is this gentleman?"

"Old hermit," said Monkey, "how is it that you know him but didn't recognize me?"

"Please excuse my ignorance," the hermit replied.

"He is Sun Wukong, the senior of my disciples," explained Sanzang.

"I apologize for my discourtesy," said the hermit.

Sanzang bowed again and asked him the way to the Great Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven. "Far away," the other replied, "far away. The journey is a long one and there are many tigers and leopards along the way. It will be difficult."

"How far is it?" asked Sanzang with great interest. "Although the journey is a long one," the hermit replied,

"you are bound to get there in the end. But there will be evil influences that you'll find hard to dispel. I have a *Heart Sutra,* a total of 270 words in 54 sentences, and if you recite it when you encounter evil influences you will come to no harm." Sanzang prostrated himself on the ground and begged the hermit to tell him it, and the hermit recited it to him. It went:

When the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was meditating on the profound prajna – paramita, he perceived that all the five aggregates are void and empty, and he was thereupon freed from all sufferings and calamities.

Sariputra, matter is not different from voidness and voidness is not different from matter: matter is voidness and voidness is matter. Such is also the case with sensation, perception, discrimination and consciousness.

Sariputra, all these things are void in nature, having neither beginning nor end, being neither pure nor impure, and having neither increase nor decrease. Therefore, in voidness there is not matter, no sensation, no perception, no discrimination and no consciousness; there is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body and no mind; there is no sight, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch and no mental process; there is no category of eye nor is there a category of consciousness; no ignorance nor the cessation of ignorance; no old age and death, nor the cessation of old age and death; there is no suffering, no causes of suffering, no cessation of suffering, and no way leading go the cessation of suffering; and there is no wisdom, nor anything to be

gained.

As nothing is to be gained, a Bodhisattva depending on prajna－paramita becomes free in his mind, and as he is free in his mind he has no fear and is rid of dreamlike thoughts of unreality and enjoys ultimate Nirvana. By meanofprajna－paramita, allBuddhasofthepast, thepresentandthefuturerealize anuttara－samyak－sambodhi. Therefore, we know prajna－paramita is a great, divine spell, a great enlightening spell, a supreme spell, and a spell without a parallel, that can do away with all sufferings without fail. Thus we recite the Prajna－paramita Spell and say: Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, bodhi, svaha!

As the Patriarch from the Tang had already the origins of enlightenment inside himself, he was able to remember the *Heart Sutra* after only one hearing, and it has been passed on down to this very day. This sutra is the kernel of the cultivation of the truth, and it is the gateway to becoming a Buddha. When the hermit had recited it, he started to rise up to his crow's nest by cloud, but Sanzang tugged at him and said that he wanted to know about the way to the Western Heaven. To this the hermit replied with a smile:

"The journey will not be difficult,

If you try to follow my instructions.

There will be a thousand mountains, a thousand deep rivers.

Many evil miasmas, and many a devil.

If you reach the edge of the sky

Do not worry or be afraid.

If you come to Precipitous Cliff

Walk with your feet placed sideways.

Be careful in the Black Pine Forest,

Where many an evil fox may block your path.

The capital cities will be full of spirits,

And demon kings will live in the mountains.

Tigers will sit in the music rooms,

Wolves will be in charge of the accounts.

Lions and elephants will all be kings,

With tigers and leopards for ministers.

A wild boar will carry your luggage,

A water monster will lead the way.

A very old stone monkey

Has no cause to be angry.

Ask those friends of yours— —

They know the way to the West."

Monkey smiled bitterly and said, "Let's go. No need to ask him; you can ask me." Sanzang did not understand what he meant. The hermit changed himself into a beam of golden light and went up to his nest, while the venerable Sanzang bowed to him in gratitude. Monkey, now furiously angry, raised his iron cudgel and was just going up to wreck the place when ten thousand lotus flowers appeared, protected by a thousand miraculous mists. Brother Monkey, you are strong enough to stir up the ocean or turn a river upside—down; but don't even dream of touching a twig of that nest! When Sanzang saw what he was going to do, he grabbed hold of him and said, "Wukong, what do you mean by trying to wreck this Bodhisattva's nest?"

"He insulted us two disciples," Monkey replied.

"He did not insult you," said Sanzang. "He was talking about the way to the Western Heaven."

"You wouldn't be able to understand," Monkey said. "When he said, 'A wild boar will carry your luggage,' he was insulting Pig; and 'A very old stone monkey' was an insult to me. You didn't get his meaning, of course."

"Don't be angry," said Pig. "That hermit knows about the past and the

future as well. We don't yet know whether his talk about a water monster leading the way will come true or not. Let him off."

Monkey saw the lotus blossoms and the miraculous mists draw in round the nest, and could but ask his master to mount the horse and go down the mountain to the West. On this journey, Although they knew blessings rare on earth,

There was many a demon and disaster in the hill.

If you don't know what lay in store for them, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 19

286

Journey to the West

Chapter 20

The Tang Priest Meets Trouble on the Yellow Wind Ridge

Pig Wins Mastery Halfway up the Mountain

The Dharma is born in the mind,

And in turn is destroyed by the mind.

Who do life and death come from?

Decide for yourself.

If it is all from your own mind,

Why do you need others to tell you?

All you need to do is work hard,

Squeezing blood out of iron.

Thread a silken rope through your nose.

And fasten yourself to emptiness.

Tie it to the tree of non－action,

To prevent it from collapsing.

Don't acknowledge bandits as your sons,

Or you will forget the Dharma and the mind.

Do not allow yourself to be deceived by others – –

Smash them first with a punch.

When the mind appears it is non – existent,

When the Dharma appears, it ceases.

When the boy and the ox both disappear,

The blue sky is absolutely clear.

All is as round as an autumn moon,

And this and that can no longer be distinguished.

This *gatha* refers to how the Patriarch Xuanzang came to awareness and understanding of the *Heart Sutra* and thus opened the gate. As that venerable elder recited it constantly, a ray of miraculous light penetrated through to him.

Eating and sleeping in the open, the three of them traveled on, and before long the heat of summer was upon them.

The blossoms were over, the butterflies' passion spent.

High in the trees the cicadas screeched.

Wild silkworms spun cocoons amid the pomegranate blossom,

As lotus flowers opened in the pool.

As they were travelling along one evening they saw a cottage beside the road. "Look," said Sanzang, "the sun is setting behind the Western hills, hiding its mirror of fire, and the moon is rising from the Eastern sea to show its wheel of ice. How lucky that there is a family living by our path. Let's spend the night here and set off again tomorrow

morning."

"Well said," put in Pig. "I'm a bit hungry, and if we begged some food from that house I'd have more strength for carrying the luggage."

"Homesick ghost," remarked Brother Monkey, "you've only been away from home for a few days, but you're already regretting that you came."

"Elder brother," Pig replied, "I can't live on wind and mist like you. You couldn't realize how the hunger's been gnawing at my stomach all these days I've been following our master."

"Pig," said Sanzang, "if your heart is still at home, you are not intended for a religious life, and you'd better go back."

The oafish Pig fell to his knees and pleaded, "Master, please don't pay any attention to what my elder brother says: it's an insult. He says I wish I hadn't come, but in fact I've had no regrets at all. I may be stupid, but I'm straight. I just said that I was hungry and want to beg for some food, and he starts calling me a homesick ghost. But the Bodhisattva told me about the prohibitions, and you have been so kind to me; so I really do want to serve you on your journey to the West. I'll never have any regrets, I swear I won't. This is what they call 'cultivating conduct the hard way'. What right have you to say I shouldn't be a monk?"

"Very well then," said Sanzang, "up you get."

The idiot leapt up, and picked up the carrying–pole, chattering incessantly. Then he pressed grimly on. Before long they reached the roadside house, where Sanzang dismounted as Monkey took the bridle and Pig put Chapter 20

down his burden. They all stood in a green shade. Sanzang took his nine–ringed monastic staff, straightened his rattan hat, and hurried to the gates, where he saw an old man lying back on a bamboo bed mumbling Buddhist scriptures to himself.

Not wanting to shout loudly, Sanzang said in a quiet voice, "Greetings, benefactor."

The old man sprang to his feet, straightened his clothes, and came out through the gate to return his greeting.

"Excuse my discourtesy, venerable sir," he said, going on to ask, "Where are you from, and why have you come to my humble abode?"

"I am a monk from the Great Tang in the East," Sanzang replied, "and I bear an imperial command to worship the Buddha in the Thunder Monastery and ask for the scriptures. As we find ourselves in this district at nightfall, I would be enormously obliged if you could allow us to spend the night in your mansion."

"You'll never get there," said the old man with a wave of his hand and a shake of his head. "It's impossible to get scriptures from the Western Heaven. If you want scriptures you'd better go to the Eastern Heaven."

Sanzang said nothing as he asked himself why the old man was telling them to go East when the Bodhisattva had instructed them to go West. How could the scriptures be obtained in the East, he asked himself. In his embarrassment he was at loss for words, so he made no reply.

Monkey, who was rough by his very nature, could not stand for this, so he went up to the old man and shouted, "Old fellow, you may be very ancient but you're a complete fool. We holy men from far away come to ask for lodging, but all you can do is to try to put us off. If your house is too poky and there isn't room for us to sleep in it, we'll sit under the trees all night and won't trouble you any further." The old man grabbed hold of Sanzang and said, "Master, you didn't warn me that you had a disciple with such a twisted face and no chin to speak of, looking like a thunder god with his red eyes. You shouldn't let a demon of sickness like him alarm and offend a person of my age."

"You're completely lacking in judgement, old man," Monkey said with a laugh. "Those pretty boys may look good but, as they say, they don't taste good. I may be little but I'm tough, and it's all muscle under my skin."

"I suppose you must have some powers," the old man remarked.

"Without wishing to boast," Monkey replied, "I can get by."

"Where is your home," the old man asked, "and why did you shave your head and become a monk?"

"My ancestral home is the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in the land of Aolai which lies across the sea to the

East of the Eastern Continent of Superior Body. I learned how to be an evil monster from childhood, and my name was Wukong, or Awakened to Emptiness. I used my abilities to make myself the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, but as I declined heavenly office and raised a great rebellion against the Heavenly Palace, I brought a disaster down on my own head. My sufferings are now over. I've turned to the Buddhist faith and am seeking a good reward for the future by escorting His Tang Excellency, my master, on his journey to the Western Heaven to visit the Buddha. I'm not afraid of high mountains with precipitous paths, or of broad rivers with huge waves. I can catch monsters and subdue demons, capture tigers or dragons, walk in the sky, or burrow into the earth. As long as your mansion has a few broken bricks and tiles, a singing pot and an open door, I'll be able to rest here contented."

After hearing this speech, the old man said with a chuckle, "So you're a monk with the gift of the gab who suddenly switched destinies."

"You're the gabber, my child," retorted Monkey. "I'm too tired after the strain of the journey with my master to be able to talk."

"It's as well you are," the old man replied, "or you'd be talking me to death. If you have all these powers you'll be able to reach the West. How many of you are there? Please come into my cottage for the night."

"Thank you very much for not losing your temper with him," Sanzang said. "There are three of us."

"Where is the third?" the old man asked.

"Your eyes are very dim, old man," said Monkey, pointing as he continued, "Can't you see him standing in the shade there?"

When the old man, whose eyes were indeed dim, looked carefully and saw Pig's face he was so terrified that he ran into the house shouting, "Shut the gates, shut the gates, there's a monster here."

Monkey ran after him and grabbed him. "Don't be afraid, old fellow," he said, "he's not an evil monster, he's a fellow—disciple of mine."

"Very well then," replied the old man, who was trembling all over, "but what a hideous creature to be a monk."

As the old man was talking to the three monks in front of the gates, two young men appeared at the Southern end of the farm bringing an old woman and three or four children back from transplanting rice −seedlings, for which reason their clothes were tucked up and their feet were bare.

When they saw the white horse and the carrying pole with luggage and heard the shouting at the gates of their home, they did not know what was up, so they rushed forward and asked, "What are you doing?" Pig turned round, flapped his ears, and thrust his snout at them, at which they all collapsed in terror or fled.

In the confusion Sanzang kept calling out, "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid, we are good men, we are monks going to fetch the scriptures." The old man then came out again, and helped the old woman to her feet.

"Up you get, wife," he said, "there's no call for panic. This holy father is from the Tang court, and although his disciples are a bit ugly, their hearts are in the right place. Please take the youngsters inside." The old woman clung to the old man while the two young men took the children inside.

As he sat on a bamboo chair in the gatehouse, Sanzang said indignantly, "Disciples, the pair of you are ugly to look at, and your language is too coarse. You gave that whole family a terrible fright, and got me into trouble."

"I tell you truthfully, master," Pig replied, "that I've grown better −looking since I've been following you.

When I lived in Gao Village I looked so awful that I often used to scare twenty or thirty people to death by making a face and waggling my ears."

"Don't exaggerate, stupid," said Monkey with a smile, "and tidy that ugly mug of yours up a bit."

"What nonsense you're talking, Monkey," said Sanzang. "He was born that way, so how can you expect him to tidy his face up?"

Chapter 20

"He could stick his rake of a snout into his chest, and not bring it out; and he could lay those fan－shaped ears down behind his head and not waggle them. That would tidy his appearance up." Pig then tucked his snout away and laid his ears back, and stood beside Sanzang with his head bowed. Brother Monkey took the luggage inside and tethered the white horse to a post.

The old man came out again with a young man who was carrying a tray with three cups of tea on it, and when it had been drunk he gave instructions for a vegetarian meal to be prepared. The young man then brought out an old, dented, and unlacquered table, as well as a pair of benches with chipped tops and broken legs, which he put in a cool spot before asking the three of them to sit down. Sanzang then asked the old man his surname, and was told, "Your humble servant's surname is Wang."

"How many descendants have you?"

"Two sons and three grandchildren."

"Congratulations, congratulations," said Sanzang; then he asked the old man how old he was.

"I have lived in my stupidity to sixty－one."

"Splendid, splendid, you have begun a new cycle," said Sanzang. "Benefactor," he continued, "why did you say at first that it would be impossible to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven?"

"There is no problem about actually getting the scriptures," the old man replied, "it's just that the journey will be very difficult. Only some twelve miles to the West of here is a mountain called the three－hundred mile Yellow Wind Ridge, and it's full of evil monsters. That's why I said it would be impossible to get the scriptures. But as this younger gentleman says he has so many magic powers, you will be able to get there."

"Certainly, certainly," said Monkey. "With me, my master and my fellow－disciple, no devils, however fierce, will dare to provoke us."

As he spoke the youth came in with food, which he put on the table with the words, "Please eat." Sanzang put his hands together and

started to recite the grace. By then Pig had already swallowed a bowlful, and the moron finished three more before the short prayer was over.

"What a chaff–guzzler," said Monkey. "We do seem to have run into a hungry ghost."

Old Wang, however, found the speed at which Pig ate very amusing, and said, "This reverend gentleman must be very hungry. Give him more rice at once." The stupid creature indeed had a large stomach. Look at him, keeping his head down as he devours at least a dozen bowls. Sanzang and Monkey had not been able to finish two bowls, but the idiot would not stop and was still eating. "As this is far from being haute cuisine, I cannot press you too hard, but please take another mouthful."

"We have eaten enough," said Sanzang and Monkey; but Pig said, "What are you going on about, old fellow?

Who's been telling your fortune? Is that why you're going on about quizzing? Anyhow, as long as there's rice, give me some more." In a single meal the idiot ate all the rice in the house, and still said that he was only half–full. Then the table was cleared away, bamboo beds were set out for them in the gatehouse, and they went to sleep.

At dawn the next morning Monkey went to saddle the horse while Pig packed the luggage. Old Wang told his wife to prepare some pastries and hot water for then, after which the three of them thanked him and said good–bye. "If anything goes wrong on your journey," the old man said, "you must come to our place."

Chapter 20

"Don't be so discouraging, old fellow," said Monkey. "We're dedicated, and there's no turning back for us."

With that they whipped the horse, picked up the carrying–pole, and headed West.

Alas! On their journey there was no good path to the West, and there were undoubtedly demons and great disasters in store for them. Before they had been going for half a day, they reached the mountain. It was

most precipitous. Sanzang rode as far as the edge of a cliff, then dismounted to have a look.

High was the mountain,

Craggy the ridge;

Steep the cliffs,

Deep the valleys.

Springs could be heard,

And sweet smelt the flowers.

Was that mountain high?

Its summit touched the azure heavens.

Were the gorges deep?

At their bottom you could see the Underworld.

In front of the mountain

Were rolling white clouds,

And towering crags.

There were no end of myriad – fathom, soul – snatching cliffs,

In which were twisting caves for dragons,

Caves full of stalactites dripping with water.

He saw deer with branching antlers,

And river – deer gazing with fixed stare,

Coiled, red – scaled pythons,

And mischievous, white – faced apes.

At evening tigers climbed the hills to find their dens;

Dragons emerged from the waves at dawn,

To enter their caves with thunderous roars.

Birds flying in the grass

Rose in a flurry;

Beasts walking in the woods

Hurried helter – skelter.

Suddenly a pack of wolves ran past,

Making the heart pound hard with fear.

This is a place where caves are linked with caves,

And mountains stand with mountains.

The green of the peak made it like ten thousand feet of jade,

As a myriad clouds were piled above it like a cover of bluish gauze.

While Sanzang urged his silvery steed slowly forward, Monkey strolled ahead on his cloud and Pig ambled along with the carrying – pole. As they looked at the mountain they heard a whirlwind blowing up, and Sanzang was alarmed.

"Wukong," he said, "there's a whirlwind coming."

"What's there to be afraid of about a wind?" said Monkey. "It's only weather, after all, and nothing to be scared of."

"But this is a very evil wind, not like a natural wind at all," Sanzang replied.

"How can you tell?" Monkey asked.

"Just look at it," said Sanzang:

"Mighty and majestic it howls and roars,

Coming out of the distant heavens.

As it crosses the ridge the trees moan,

The trunks bend when it enters the wood.

Chapter 20

293

Journey to the West

"The willow on the bank is shaken to its roots,

And flowers and leaves go swirling round the garden.

On the fishing boats gathering in nets, they pull hard on the cables;
Ships lower their sails, and all cast anchor.

"The traveler loses his way in mid—journey,

The woodcutter in the hills cannot carry his load.

The monkeys scatter in the orchards of fairy fruit,

The deer flee from the clumps of rare flowers.

"Locust trees and cedars collapse before the cliff,

While pine and bamboo in the valley are stripped of leaves.

There are stinging blasts of dirt and sand,

And waves boil on rivers and seas."

Pig went up to Monkey and grabbed hold of him. "Brother," he said, "this is a terrific storm. Let's take shelter."

"You're useless, brother," replied Monkey with a mocking laugh. "If a big wind makes you want to hide, what are you going to do when you meet an evil spirit?"

"Elder brother, have you never heard the saying, 'Avoid a pretty girl as you would an enemy, avoid a wind as you would an arrow?'" Pig replied. "There's no reason why we shouldn't take shelter."

"Stop talking, will you, while I get a hold on that wind and take a sniff at it," said Monkey.

"You're talking through your hat again," said Pig with a grin. "As if you could get a hold on a wind. Besides, even if you did, your hand would

go through it."

"What you don't know, brother, is that I have a magic way of catching winds," Monkey replied. Letting the head of the wind pass, the splendid Monkey grabbed the tail and sniffed at it. It had rather a foul stench. "It certainly isn't a good wind," he remarked. "It smells like either a tiger wind or a monster wind. There's definitely something suspicious about it."

Chapter 20

Before the words were out of his mouth, a ferocious striped tiger leapt out at the foot of the slope, slashing with its tail and rushing towards them. Sanzang was so scared that he could no longer keep his seat in his carved saddle, but fell headfirst off his white horse and lay sprawled in a witless heap beside the path.

Pig threw down the luggage, grabbed his rake and, not letting Monkey move forward, roared, "Animal, where d'you think you're going?" He went straight after it and smote it on the head. The tiger stood up on its hind legs, and with a swing of its front left claws ripped at its own chest. There was a tearing noise as its skin all came off, and then the creature stood beside the path. Just see how hideous was: A gory, skinned body,

Round, red legs and feet.

Fiery, matted hair,

And straight, bristling eyebrows.

Four sinister steely white fangs,

A pair of glittering golden eyes.

With soaring spirits it gave a mighty roar,

A mighty and majestic shout.

"Not so fast," it yelled, "not so fast. I am none other than the Commander of the Vanguard for the Great Yellow Wind King. I bear His Majesty's strictest command to patrol the mountain and catch a few common mortals as tidbits for him to nibble with his wine. Where

are you from, monk, and how dare you wound me with that weapon of yours?"

"I'll get you, you beast," replied Pig abusively. "You don't seem to realize that I'm not just any old passing traveler: I'm a disciple of Sanzang, the younger brother of the Tang Emperor of the East, who has been sent by the Emperor to visit the Buddha in the Western Heaven and ask for the scriptures. If you clear off, stop blocking our path, and don't frighten my master any more, I'll spare your life. But if you go on raging about like that, there'll be no mercy for you."

Not bothering to argue, the evil spirit rushed at Pig, feinted, and clawed at his face. Pig dodged nimbly and swung his rake at the monster, who turned and fled as he was unarmed. With Pig at his heels he made for the bottom of the slope and produced two bronze swords from the tangled undergrowth there; then, brandishing them, he turned to face Pig. The two of them battled away at the foot of the hill, lunging and hitting at each other. Monkey, who was helping the Tang Priest to sit up, said, "Don't be afraid, master. You sit here while I help Pig to defeat that monster, then we can be on our way." Sanzang, who had managed to sit up, was shaking all over and intoning the *Heart Sutra.*

Monkey grabbed his cudgel and shouted, "Get it." Pig made a tremendous effort, and the monster fled from the scene of battle. "Don't let him get away," yelled Monkey, "you must catch it." The pair of them chased the monster down the mountain, waving the rake and the cudgel. The monster was so hard—pressed that it did a

"golden cicada shedding its skin" trick. It reverted to its real form——a ferocious tiger——with a somersault, but Monkey and Pig would still not let it get away, and were hot on its heels, determined to destroy it. When the monster saw how close they were, it ripped at its chest and tore off its skin again, then laid it over a rock that was shaped like a crouching tiger. Then it abandoned its real body, turned into a hurricane, and went straight back to the path, where it noticed Sanzang reciting the *Heart Sutra.* Sanzang was grabbed by the monster and carried away on the wind. Poor Sanzang:

The Monk of the River was fated to suffer much;

In the faith of Nirvana it is hard to win merit.

Carrying the Tang Priest to the mouth of the cave, the monster stilled the hurricane and said to the gatekeepers, "Report to His Majesty at once that the Tiger of the Vanguard has caught a monk and is awaiting further instructions outside the gates." He was then admitted on the orders of the chieftain. With his two bronze swords stuck in his belt and holding the Tang Priest in both hands, he went forward and genuflected before the chieftain. "Your Majesty," he said, "your humble underling was patrolling the mountain as ordered when suddenly I met a monk. He is the Patriarch Sanzang, the younger brother of His Majesty the Great Tang Emperor, and he was going to the West to visit the Buddha and ask for the scriptures. I have captured him and now offer him as a dish for your table."

The chieftain was astonished at the news. "I've heard tell of the Patriarch Sanzang, the holy priest sent by the Great Tang Emperor to fetch the scriptures. He has a disciple called Brother Monkey whose magical powers are tremendous and whose cunning is considerable. However did you manage to catch him?"

"He has two disciples. The first one to come at me was a fellow with a long nose and big ears who wields a nine–pronged rake, and the second one has a gold–banded iron cudgel and fiery eyes with golden pupils.

When the pair of them were after me and about to attack, I used a 'golden cicada shedding its skin' trick to make my getaway, then I caught this monk to offer to Your Majesty as a snack."

"He's not to be eaten yet," the chieftain said.

"You must be off your food, Your Majesty, if you won't eat what's put before you," said the Tiger of the Vanguard.

"You don't get my point," the chieftain replied. "It's not eating him that worries me, but the thought that those two disciples of his may come here to make trouble, which would be dangerous. Tie him to the wind–settling stake in the garden at the back, and leave him there for a few days till we're sure his disciples won't be coming to make trouble for us. This way he'll be nice and clean, and we can do what we like with him without any arguments. Whether we have him boiled, steamed, fried or scrambled, we can eat him at our leisure."

"Your Majesty's plans are most far–sighted, and you are quite right," said the Tiger of the Vanguard, who then ordered his underlings to

take Sanzang away.

Chapter 20

Seven or eight of them crowded forward to tie up Sanzang and take him away; they were like hawks seizing bramblings as they bound him tightly. Then did the unfortunate Monk of the River long for Brother Monkey; the holy priest in his troubles wished Pig would come.

"Disciples," he called out, "I don't know on what mountain you are catching monsters, or where you're subduing evil spirits, but I've met with disaster and been captured by a demon. Alas, when will I ever see you again? If you come soon, you can save my life, but if you are too long about it I will be finished." His tears poured down like rain as he moaned and sighed.

As Monkey and Pig chased the tiger down the mountain side they saw that it had reached the bottom and was crouching at the foot of the cliff. Monkey raised his cudgel and brought it down as hard as he could, thus hurting his own hands. Pig took another swipe at the beast with his rake, which made its prongs splay apart.

The Tiger turned out to be only a tiger skin spread over a rock shaped like crouching tiger.

"This is terrible," said Monkey, "he's tricked us."

"How?" Pig asked.

"The trick is called 'the golden cicada shedding its skin'. He put his tiger—skin over this rock and got away.

We'd better go back and see that our master comes to no harm." The two of them rushed back to find that Sanzang had disappeared. "Whatever shall we do?" cried Monkey in a voice as loud as thunder. "It's caught our master."

Pig led the horse over and said through his tears, "Heaven help us. Wherever shall we look for him?"

"Don't cry," said Monkey, raising his head, "don't cry. If you cry you'll dampen our spirits. I'm convinced he must be somewhere on this

mountain. We must start searching for him."

The two of them hurried deep into the mountain, going through passes and crossing ridges, and after they had been going for a long time they saw a cave palace at the foot of a rock – face. They stopped to gaze at it, and saw an awe – inspiring sight:

Screened by many a jagged peak,

With ancient paths winding around;

Green pines merged with bluish bamboo;

The softness of willows and *wutong* trees.

Odd boulders stood in pairs before the cliff,

While birds made couples hidden in the woods.

The water in the gully splashed against the rock – wall,

As the spring waters trickled over the sandbank.

Under the billowing clouds,

Rare herbs grew lush.

Fox spirits and crafty hares darted around;

Horned deer and river – deer fought for mastery.

Ancient creepers hung across the rocks,

And a thousand – year cypress was suspended in a chasm.

In pinnacled majesty it vied with Mount Hua;

The flowers and birdsong rivaled Tiantai Peak.

"Worthy brother," said Monkey, "put our baggage in the wind – storing cave, let the horse out to pasture, and lie low while I go to the gates of that place and fight it out with them. I must catch that evil spirit

before I can rescue our master."

"There's no need to give me instructions," Pig replied. "Go at once."

Monkey straightened his tunic, tightened his tiger–skin kilt, and went straight to the gate with his cudgel in his hands. Above the gate he saw YELLOW WIND CAVE OF THE YELLOW WIND RIDGE written in large letters. Taking a firm stance and brandishing the club he shouted, "Evil monsters, send my master out if you don't want this den of yours turned upside–down and your home trampled flat."

When the junior fiends heard this they were terrified, and they ran trembling inside to announce, "Your Majesty, a disaster."

"What is it?" asked the Yellow Wind Monster who was sitting inside.

"There's a thunder–voiced, hairy–faced monk outside with a great thick iron cudgel in his hands, and he wants his master back," they said.

The alarmed chieftain sent for the Tiger of the Vanguard and said to him, "When I sent you to patrol the mountain you were only supposed to catch mountain oxen, wild boar, deer, and goats. Why on earth did you bring that Tang Priest here? It's provoked his disciple into coming to make trouble. What are we to do?"

"There is no need for Your Majesty to worry," the Tiger replied. "Your incompetent underling will take fifty junior officers out with me and bring back that Brother Monkey as a second course for the meal."

"Apart from the higher and lower ranking commanders, we have about six hundred junior officers here," said the chieftain. "Take as many of them as you like with you. If you catch that Monkey, we can dine off the priest at our leisure, and I promise to make you my sworn brother. But I'm afraid that you won't be able to get him, and that he'll kill you. If that happens, don't blame me."

"Rest assured," the tiger monster said, "rest assured. I'll soon be back with him." Mustering fifty strong and spirited young fiends, he charged out of the gates with drums rolling and banners waving; his two bronze swords were tied to his body. "Where are you from, ape monk?" he shrieked at the top of his voice. "What do you mean by all this yelling and shouting?"

Chapter 20

"You skinned beast," Monkey retorted, "you played that trick of skinning yourself to capture my master, and you have the nerve to ask me what I'm doing! Bring my master out at once and I'll spare your life."

"Yes, I captured your master," the monster replied, "and he's going to be served up at His Majesty's dinner table. If you have any sense, go away. Otherwise I'll catch you too, and you'll be served up with him. As I've got one of you, I'll let the other off." Monkey was now furious, and he gnashed his steely teeth as his fiery eyes opened wide in a terrible glare.

"What powers have you," he roared, brandishing his iron cudgel, "to give you the nerve to talk so big? Hold it a moment, and take this." The tiger put his hands on his swords, and a terrible fight ensued as each of them showed off his powers.

The monster was like a goose egg,

Monkey was an egg – shaped stone.

Trying to ward off Monkey with bronze swords

Was like throwing eggs at a stone.

How can a crow or jackdaw fight a phoenix?

What chance has a pigeon against a hawk?

The monster snorted out winds that covered the mountain with dust,
But Monkey breathed a fog that blotted out the sun.

After fighting it out for many a round,

The Vanguard was exhausted, his strength all gone.

He turned away, defeated, to flee for his life,

Only to have Monkey harry him to death.

When he could defend himself no longer, the monster turned to flee. As he had talked so boastfully in front of his chieftain he dared not return to the cave, so he tried to escape up the mountain side.

Monkey, who had no intention of letting him go, chased him as fast as he could, waving his cudgel, roaring, and howling. He chased him as far as the hollow where the wind was stored, where Pig could be seen pasturing the horse. As soon as Pig heard the shouting he turned to look, and when he saw Monkey pursuing the defeated tiger monster he let go of the horse, raised his rake, and struck the tiger diagonally across the head. The poor monster, who thought he had made his way out of the silken net, never realized that he had been caught by a fish −trapper. Pig's rake made nine holes from which the blood gushed, and the brains all spurted out. There is a pome to prove it that goes:

Converted to the true faith several years before,

He avoided meat and was awakened to emptiness.

Determined with all his heart to defend Sanzang

He won this merit early in his religious life.

Planting his foot in the middle of the monster's back, Pig swung the rake with both hands and smote him again. When Monkey saw this he was delighted, and he said, "That's the way, brother. He led a few dozen petty fiends out to do battle with me, but I beat him. Instead of running back to the cave he came this way, as if he wanted to die. If you hadn't been here to meet him, he'd have got away again."

"Was he the one who made a gale and carried off our master?" Pig asked.

"The very one," Monkey replied. "Did you ask him where our master is?" Pig asked.

"He took our master into the cave and wanted to give him to his chieftain to eat with his rice. This made me so angry that I fought him all the way to here, where you finished him off. The credit for this must go to you, brother. You'd better go on looking after the horse and our things while I drag that monster's body over to the cave and challenge them to another fight. We must capture the chief monster if we're to rescue our master."

"You're right," said Pig, "so off you go. If you beat that chief monster, mind you chase him this way for me to corner and kill." Splendid Monkey went straight to the mouth of the cave with his cudgel in one hand and the dead tiger in the other. Indeed:

When the patriarch was in danger from evil monsters,

Emotion and Nature combined to subdue the demons.

If you don't know whether he defeated the evil monsters and saved Sanzang, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 21

The Protectors of the Faith Build a Farm for the Great Sage

Lingji from Sumeru Pacifies the Wind Devil

The fifty petty devils fled routed into the cave, their banners and drums smashed, to report, "Your Majesty, the Tiger of the Vanguard is no match for the hairy–faced monk, who chased him down the mountain." The old fiend was very angry at the news, and he sat silent with his head bowed as he thought over what to do.

Then the petty demons from the gate came in to announce, "Your Majesty, the hairy–faced monk has killed Chapter 21

the Tiger of the Vanguard and dragged his body to the gates, where he's insulting us to provoke us to fight."

The old fiend was angrier than ever when he heard this, and he said, "This wretch doesn't know what he's doing, killing my Commander of the Vanguard although I haven't eaten his master. Hateful beast. Bring my armour. I've heard of this Brother Monkey, and now I think I'll go out to have a look at this nine–headed, eight–tailed monk. I'll capture him to avenge my Tiger of the Vanguard." The junior devils brought the armour as fast as they could, and when the old fiend had put it all on properly, he took his steel trident and led his devilish host out of the cave. He was full of martial dignity as he came out, and you can see how he was equipped:

His golden helmet shone in the sun,

And light was reflected from his golden armour.

A pheasant's tail floated above his helmet,

And the thin silk robe over his armour was pale goose – yellow.

The belt that girded his armour was dragon – brilliant;

His shining breastplate dazzled the eye.

His deerskin boots

Were the color of locust – tree blossom;

His brocade kilt

Was patterned with willow leaves.

With a sharp steel trident in his hand,

He was no less awesome than the Little Sage Erlang.

As he came out of his cave the old fiend shouted at the top of his voice, "Are you Brother Monkey?"

Monkey, who was jumping up and down on the tiger monster's corpse and brandishing his cudgel, replied,

"Your grandfather, Monkey, is here. Send my master out." The evil spirit looked carefully at Monkey and saw that he had a miserable little body and a pinched face, and did not even stand four feet tall.

"Poor little thing," he said with a laugh. "I'd imagined that you were some sort of invincible hero, but now I see what a little sick devil you really are, all skin and bone."

Monkey smiled back and said, "You've no eyes in your head, my child. I may be tiny, but if you hit me on the head with the handle of your trident, I'll grow another six feet."

"Make your head hard then," the monster replied, "here it comes."

The Great Sage did not flinch as the monster hit him, then with a bend of his waist he grew six feet taller, making himself ten feet tall altogether, to the astonishment of the monster, who put his trident down and shouted, "Brother Monkey, why do you come and do these defensive transformations at my gate? Stop fooling around, and come over here so we can compare tricks."

"My child," Monkey replied, "as the saying goes, 'If you have any warm feelings, don't raise your hand in anger; and if you raise your hand in anger, put all feelings aside.' I have a very heavy hand, and I'm afraid that you may not be able to stand my cudgel." No longer wishing to talk, the monster whirled his trident round and lunged at Monkey's chest. With unrushed expertise Monkey did a "Black Dragon Pawing the Ground"

movement to parry the trident with his cudgel before striking at the monster's head. There followed a fine duel between the pair of them at the mouth of the Yellow Wind Gave: The demon king was furious,

The Great Sage showed his might.

The furious demon king

Wanted to catch Monkey in revenge for his Vanguard Commander;

The mighty Great Sage

Intended to capture the evil spirit and rescue his master.

When the trident came the cudgel parried,

When the cudgel struck the trident blocked.

One was supreme commander of the mountain,

The other was the Handsome Monkey King, Protector of the Law.

At first they fought in the dust,

But then they rose into mid – air.

The steel – tipped trident

Was bright – pointed and deadly sharp;

The As – You – Will cudgel

Was black and banded with gold.

Whoever was run through would go to the Underworld;

If either was hit he would surely meet King Yama.

All depended on a fast hand and a quick eye;

Strength and vigor were essential.

Each was mindless of life or death,

Who would survive, and who would be killed?

After some thirty rounds of combat between the old fiend and the Great Sage the issue was still not settled. As Monkey wanted to win glory he used an "extra body" trick: plucking a hair out, he chewed it into little bits, blew them all out, and shouted, "Change!" They turned into well over a hundred Monkeys, all dressed like him and wielding iron cudgels. They surrounded the monster in mid–air, and in his fright he countered with a trick of his own. He turned his head sharply to the Southeast opened his mouth three times, and blew. A yellow hurricane suddenly arose. It was really terrible.

As it howled and moaned all was changed;

Without sign or shadow the yellow dust whirled,

Whistling through forests, toppling mountains, and uprooting trees,
Picking up dust to blot out the tumbling ridge.

The Yellow River's waters were all in turmoil,

While the Yangtse's waves were blown backwards.

The Polar palace was rocked in the sky,

The Senluo Palace in the Underworld was all but blown down.

Heaven was filled with the shouting of Arhats,

The Eight Great Vajrapanis were all yelling wildly.

Manjusri's black – coated lion fled,

Samantabhadra's white elephant was nowhere to be found.

The True Martial Emperor's tortoise and snake were missing,

Zi Tong's mule was blown away by its saddle – cloth.

Travelling merchants called on Heaven,

Boatmen made vows to the gods as they sought safety.

Lives were washed away in the torrent,

Fortune or death was decided by the waters.

The cave palace on the magic mountain was murky dark,

And Penglai, island of joy, was wrapped in gloom.

Lao Zi could hardly manage to look after his furnace,

The Star of Longevity put away his fan of dragon's beard grass.

The Queen Mother, on her way to a Peach Banquet,

Had the pendants at her waist blown in a tangle.

Erlang could not find his city of Guanzhou;

Nezha could scarcely draw his sword from its scabbard.

Heavenly King Li lost sight of the pagoda in his hand,

Lu Ban the carpenter dropped his gold – tipped awl.

Three stories of the pagoda at Thunder Monastery fell,

And the stone bridge at Zhaozhou collapsed.

The red wheel of the sun sent out no light,

And all the stars in the sky were dimmed.

The birds of the Southern hills were carried to the North,

The waters of the East lake flowed to the West.

Husband was parted from wife,

Mother snatched from child.

The dragon king searched the seas for his yakshas,

The thunder god hunted everywhere for his lightning.

The Ten Kings of hell looked for the judge,

While the bull-headed demons searched for the horse-faced.

This hurricane overturned Potaraka Island,

Rolling up all of Guanyin's scriptures.

The white lotus went flying beyond the seas,

And the twelve courts of the Bodhisattva were all blown down.

Pan Gu, who had seen all winds since creation,

Had never seen one as fine as this,

Howl, howl— —

As mountains and seas trembled,

Heaven and Earth were all but blasted asunder.

The hurricane that the monster had summoned up made all the little Monkeys that the Great Sage had produced from his hair whirl round in mid-air like so many spinning-wheels, and, far from being able to use their cudgels, they could not even control their own bodies. At

this critical moment Monkey shook his hair and put it back on his body, then advanced to give battle with his iron cudgel held high. The monster blew another yellow hurricane at him, and it was so strong that Monkey had to shut his fiery eyes with their golden pupils tight. Opening them was out of the question. Unable to use his iron cudgel, he had to flee from the scene of battle, at which the monster put his wind away and went back to his cave.

When Pig saw the great yellow hurricane blow up and cast Heaven and Earth into darkness, he held on to the horse and kept a grip on the carrying pole while he crouched in the hollow on the mountain side, not daring to open his eyes or raise his head as he invoked the Buddha and made all sorts of vows to him. He did not know whether Monkey had won or lost, or whether their master was still alive. As he worried about all this the wind died down and the sky became clear again. He raised his head to look towards the entrance of the cave, but he could neither see any weapons nor hear any gongs or drums. The idiot did not want to get any nearer to those gates, and there was nobody else to look after the horse and the baggage, so he was stuck there, not knowing what to do, and feeling miserable. His gloomy thoughts were interrupted by the sound of Monkey shouting to the West of him. Pig half rose to his feet to welcome him and said, "That was quite a wind, elder brother.

Where've you been?"

"That was terrible," said Monkey, "Never in my life have I known such a hurricane. That old fiend came out to fight me with a steel trident, and after we'd been at it for thirty rounds I used my extra body trick to surround him. This made him so worried that he deliberately summoned up the wind. It was really vicious— —it blew so hard I couldn't stand my ground, so I had to put my tricks away and clear out. What a wind, what a wind! I can call up wind or rain, but I've never produced anything as vicious as his."

"Can that evil monster fight well?" Pig asked.

"He's not bad at all," Monkey replied, "and he has a very neat way with this trident. We were evenly matched, apart from that foul wind, which makes him unbeatable."

"Then how are we going to rescue our master?" Pig asked.

"His rescue will have to wait," Monkey replied. "I wonder if there's an oculist near here to treat my eyes."

"What's happened to them?" Pig asked.

Chapter 21

305

Journey to the West

"When that monster blew his wind at me," said Monkey, "it made my eyes very sore, and they keep on watering."

"We're halfway up a mountain, and night's falling," said Pig. "Never mind about an oculist, there's nowhere for us to shelter for the night."

"There's no problem about shelter," Monkey replied. "I don't think that evil spirit will dare to do our master any harm, so let's find the main path and look for a house to stay in tonight. We can come back here at first light to subdue that fiend."

"Very well, very well," Pig replied.

Leading the horse and carrying the baggage, they came out of the hollow and went along the path. The dusk was gradually deepening when they heard dogs barking under a hill to the South of the path. They stopped to look and saw a farmhouse with a lamp shining brightly in its window. The pair of them stopped bothering to look for the path and cut straight through the grass to the gate. They saw Dark magic fungus,

Greeny white rocks.

The magic fungus was dark among the many herbs,

The white rocks were green with moss.

Some tiny fireflies made dots of light

Against the dense ranks of the forest trees.

Heavy was the fragrance of the orchid,

And the tender bamboo had been newly cut.

A pure spring flowed along a winding bed,

An ancient cypress hung over a cliff.

No travelers came to this remote spot,

And only wild flowers bloomed before the gate.

As they did not want to march straight in, the two of them shouted, "Open up, open up."

An old man came out at the head of several farm hands carrying forks, rakes and brooms. "Who are you," he asked, "who are you?"

Chapter 21

"We are the disciples of the holy priest of the Great Tang in the East," replied Monkey with a bow. "We were crossing these mountains on our way to the West to visit the Buddha and ask for the scriptures when the Great King of the Yellow Wind snatched our master away. We haven't been able to rescue him yet, but as it is getting dark we have come to beg for a night's lodging in your mansion, and we hope very much that you will help us."

The old man returned his bow and said, "I'm sorry I didn't welcome you properly. This is a place where we see a lot of clouds but very few people, and when I heard you shouting at the gate I feared it might be fox – spirits, tigers, bandits from the mountains, or something of the sort. I am afraid that I have stupidly offended you: I did not realize it would be two reverend gentlemen. Please come in." Taking the horse and the luggage with them they went inside, tethered the animal, put down the carrying pole, bowed to the old man, and sat down. A servant came in with tea, and when they had drunk it some bowls of sesame meal were produced. After they had eaten, the old man had beds prepared for them and suggested that they went to bed.

"We don't need to sleep yet," Monkey replied, adding, "may I ask you, kind sir, if eye ointment is sold anywhere around here?"

"Do you have a chronic eye complaint, reverend sir?" the old man asked.

"I can tell you truthfully, sir," Monkey replied, "that we religious men have never been ill before, and I've never had trouble with my eyes before."

"Then why are you asking for ointment?" the old man asked.

"We were trying to rescue our master on the Yellow Wind Ridge today," Monkey explained, "when that monster started blowing his wind at me, which made my eyes ache. They're streaming with tears now, which is why I want to find some eye ointment."

"A fine story," the old man commented. "How could you tell such lies, a reverend gentleman, and so young a one at that? The Great King of the Yellow Wind's hurricane is really terrible. It can't be compared with spring winds, autumn winds, pine and bamboo winds, or North, South, East and West winds."

"It must be a brain—snatching wind," interrupted Pig, "or a goat's ear wind, or a hemp wind, or a head—twisting wind."

"No, no," the old man said, "it's called a Divine Samadhi Wind."

"What's it like?" Monkey asked.

"It can darken Heaven and Earth,

Make gods and devils gloomy,

Split rocks open and bring cliffs down,

And it doesn't stop till you're dead,"

the old man replied. "If you'd encountered that wind, you couldn't possibly have survived. Only a god or an Immortal would be able to survive such a wind."

"Quite right," Monkey replied, "quite right. Although we're not gods or Immortals ourselves, I regard them as my juniors, and this life of mine is extremely hard to snuff out——all the wind could do was to make my eyes very sore."

"If what you say is true," the old man said, "you must really be somebody. Although there is nowhere that sells eye ointment here, I sometimes suffer from watering eyes myself when I'm in the wind, and I once met an unusual person who gave me a prescription for 'Three

Flower Nine Seed Ointment'. This cures all inflammations of the eye."

Monkey bowed his head, chanted a respectful "na – a – aw," and said, "Please put a little on my eyes for me to try." The old man consented, went inside, and brought out a tiny agate bottle. Removing the stopper, he dipped a jade hairpin inside and put a tiny amount in Monkey's eyes, then told him not to open them. He could go to sleep without worrying, and in the morning he would be cured. When he had finished applying it he put the stopper back the bottle and gave it to a servant to put away inside. Pig opened their bundles, spread out their bedding, and told Monkey to go to bed.

Monkey groped about so wildly with his eyes shut that Pig laughed at him and said, "Would you like a blind man's stick, sir?"

"Chaff – guzzling moron," Monkey retorted, "do you want to make a blind man of me?" The idiot chuckled himself quietly to sleep, but Monkey sat thinking on the bed until midnight before he dozed off.

At about five the next morning, just before the break of day, Brother Monkey rubbed his face, opened his eyes and said, "It certainly is good ointment – – I can see far, and more clearly than ever." He turned round to look behind him, and to his astonishment there was no house, windows, or doors; all that could be seen were some ancient locust trees and tall willows. The pair of them were sleeping on cushions of green sedge.

"What are you shouting for?" asked Pig as he woke up.

"Open your eyes and look," replied Monkey. The idiot raised his head, and when he saw that there was nobody there, he leapt up in a panic with the words, "Where's our horse?"

"Over there, tied to a tree," said Monkey.

"What about the luggage?"

"There, beside your head."

"The wretches," said Pig, "moving way in the middle of the night. Damn it, we must have been almost dead asleep. However did they dismantle the house without us hearing a thing?"

"Idiot," said Monkey with a snigger, "don't go shouting all over the place. Can you see what that piece of paper on the tree over there is?" Pig went over, tore it down, and saw that there were four lines of

verse on it:

"This farm was not inhabited by mortals;

The Revealers of the Truth produced the house by magic.

I gave you good medicine to cure your eyes:

Subdue demons with all your heart, and never hesitate."

"So those tough gods came to play their tricks, although I haven't called the roll since they changed the dragon into a horse," said Monkey.

"Don't show off, brother," said Pig. "How could they possibly answer to your roll—call?"

"You don't realize," Monkey replied, "that the Protectors of the Faith, the Six Dings, the Six Jias, the Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions and the Four Duty Gods have all been ordered by the Bodhisattva to give secret protection to our master. They reported their names to me then, but as I've had you with me recently I haven't needed them again, which is why I haven't called the roll."

"Brother," Pig replied, "if they have been ordered to protect our master in secret, then of course they can't appear in their true forms. That was why they produced the magic farm. You mustn't be angry with them.

Yesterday they gave you eye ointment and fed us——they did all they could. Don't be angry with them. Let's go and rescue the master instead."

"How right you are," said Monkey. "It's not far from here to the Yellow Wind Cave, so there's no need for you to move. You'd better stay in the wood and look after the horse and the luggage while I go to the cave to see what I can find out about where our master is before fighting the monster again."

"Yes," said Pig, "find out for sure whether he's alive or dead. If the master's dead, we'd better each go our own way, and if he's alive we'll

do everything we can to save him."

"Stop talking such nonsense," replied Monkey. "I'm off."

With a single jump he arrived at the entrance to the cave, where the gates were still locked as everyone was asleep. Monkey did not call on them to open the gates as he did not want to alarm the monsters. Instead he said a spell, made a magic movement with his hand, shook himself, and turned into a neat little mosquito.

There are some lines about it that go:

Its troublesome little body has a sharp bite,

Its faint buzz echoes like thunder.

Clever at getting through the curtains round the bed,

It particularly loves the summer's warm weather.

It fears only smoke and fly–swatters,

And loves the brilliance of the lamp.

Light and tiny, it flies straight in,

Entering the evil spirit's cave.

Seeing that the lowly demon on the gate was fast asleep and snoring, Monkey bit him on the face, at which the creature woke up and said, "My lord! What an enormous mosquito! It's raised a huge lump with a single bite."

Then he opened his eyes and announced, "It's light." The two gates creaked open, and Monkey flew inside with a buzz to see the old demon giving orders that a very close watch was to be kept at all the gates, and all the weapons are to be assembled at such–and–such a spot.

"I'm afraid that yesterday's wind may not have killed Brother Monkey," he was saying, "and I think he's bound to come back today. When he

does, I'll finish him off."

When he heard this, Monkey flew across to the back of the hall where he saw a door that was tightly closed.

He slipped through the crack between the two leaves of the door and found himself in a large empty garden, on one side of which was the wind–settling stake with the Tang Priest tied to it. The tears were pouring down Sanzang's face as he wondered where Monkey and Pig were. Monkey stopped flying as he stung his shaven pate and called, "Master."

"Monkey," said Sanzang, recognizing his voice, "do you want to get me killed? Where are you calling me from?"

"I'm on your head, master. Don't be anxious or worried. We are sure to catch that evil spirit and save your life."

"How long will it be till you catch that evil spirit, disciple?"

"Pig has already killed the tiger monster who captured you," Monkey replied, "but that old fiend has a terrible way with a hurricane. All the same, I'm certain that I can catch him today, so don't worry and stop crying. I'm off now."

With those words he buzzed away to the front hall, where he saw the old monster sitting on his throne and reviewing his captains. A junior evil spirit suddenly rushed in with a command flag in his hands and announced, "I had just gone out to patrol the mountain, Your Majesty, when I saw a monk with a long snout and big ears sitting in the woods. If I hadn't run as fast as I could, he'd have caught me. But I didn't see that hairy–faced monk."

"If Brother Monkey wasn't there," the old fiend said, "he must have been killed by the wind, and he won't be going off to get soldiers to rescue his master."

"If the wind killed him, Your Majesty," the other devils said, "we are in luck. But if he wasn't killed and went to fetch divine soldiers instead, what's to be done?"

"What's so frightening about divine soldiers?" the old fiend said. "None of them can put down my wind except the Bodhisattva Lingji, so there's no need to fear the rest of them."

When Monkey heard this as he sat on a roof–beam, he was beside

himself with delight. Flying straight out, he reverted to his real form and went back to the wood, calling, "Brother."

Chapter 21

"Where have you been?" Pig asked. "I chased an evil spirit with a command flag away just now."

"Good for you," said Monkey with a smile, "good for you. I changed myself into a mosquito and went into the cave to see our master. He was tied to a wind—settling stake in there and crying. I told him not to cry, flew up to a roof—beam, and had a good listen. I saw the one with the command flag come puffing and panting in to report that you'd chased him away and that he hadn't seen me. The old fined was making some wild guesses.

First he said that I had been killed by his wind, then he said I'd gone to ask for the help of divine soldiers. It's wonderful— —he gave the fellow's name away."

"Whose name?" Pig asked.

"He said that no divine soldier could suppress his wind except the Bodhisattva Lingji," Monkey continued, adding, "but I don't know where the Bodhisattva Lingji lives."

As they were wondering what to do, an old man came along the road. Look at him: He was strong enough not to need a stick,

But his beard was like ice and his flowing hair snowy.

Although his gold—flecked sparkling eyes seemed somewhat dim,

His aged bones and muscles had not lost their strength.

Slowly he walked, back bent, and head bowed down,

But his broad brow and rosy cheeks were those of a boy.

If you gave him a name from his looks,

The Star of Longevity had come out of his cave.

When Pig saw him he said with delight, "Brother, you know the saying, 'If you want to know the way down the mountain, ask a regular traveler.' Why don't you ask him?" The Great Sage put his iron cudgel away, unhitched his clothes, and went up to the old man. "Greetings, grandfather," he said.

Half replying to him and half not, the old man returned his bow and asked, "Where are you from, monk, and what are you doing in this desolate spot?"

"We are holy monks going to fetch the scriptures," Monkey replied. "Yesterday we lost our master here, and we would like to ask you, sir, where the Bodhisattva Lingji lives."

"Lingji lives a thousand miles due South of here," the old man said, "on a mountain called Little Mount Sumeru. There is a holy place there which is the monastery where he preaches the scriptures. Are you going to fetch scriptures from him."

"No," Monkey replied, "we're going not to fetch scriptures from him, but to trouble him over something else.

How does one get there?"

The old man pointed South and said, "That twisting path will take you." Thus tricking the Great Sage into turning round to look, the old man turned into a puff of wind and disappeared from sight. All that could be seen of him was a piece of paper he had left beside the road. On it there were four lines of verse that read:

"I report to the Great Sage Equaling Heaven,

That I am Long Life Li.

On Sumeru Mountain there is a Flying Dragon Staff,

The weapon the Buddha once gave to Lingji."

Brother Monkey took the note turned, and set off. "What lousy luck we've been having for the last few days, brother," said Pig. "For the last couple of days we've been seeing ghosts even in broad daylight.

Who was that old man who turned into a wind?" Monkey handed the piece of paper to him, and when he had read it he said,

"Who is this Long Life Li?"

"He's the Great White Planet of the West," Monkey replied.

Pig immediately bowed low and said, "My benefactor, my benefactor. If he hadn't put in a memorial to the Jade Emperor, I don't know what would have become of me."

"So you're capable of feeling gratitude," said Monkey. "Meanwhile, you're to hide deep in these woods without showing yourself, and keep a close watch on the baggage and the horse while I go to Mount Sumeru to ask the Bodhisattva to come."

"Understood," said Pig, "understood. You go as fast as you can. I've learned the tortoise's trick, and can pull my head in when necessary."

The Great Sage Monkey leapt into the air and headed South on his somersault cloud at tremendous speed. He could cover a thousand miles with a nod of his head, and do eight hundred stages with a twist of his waist. It was only an instant before he saw a high mountain surrounded by auspicious clouds and a propitious aura. In a valley on the mountain there was a monastery from which the distant sounds of bells and stone chimes could be heard, and a haze of incense smoke hung above it. Monkey went straight to the gate, where he saw a lay brother with prayer beads round his neck who was invoking the Buddha.

"Greetings, lay brother," said Monkey, clasping his hands in salutation.

The lay brother bowed to him in reply and said, "Where are you from, sir?"

"Is this where the Bodhisattva Lingji preaches the scriptures?" Monkey asked.

"Yes, this is the place," the lay brother replied. "Have you a message for him?"

"I would like you to tell him that I am Brother Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, a disciple of the Patriarch Sanzang, the younger brother of His Majesty the Emperor of the Great Tang in the East, and there is a matter about which I should like to see the Bodhisattva."

"That's far too many words for me to remember, sir," said the lay brother with a smile.

"Then tell him that the Tang Priest's disciple Sun Wukong is here," Monkey replied. The lay brother did as he asked and went into the preaching hall to pass on the message. The Bodhisattva put on his cassock, burnt some incense, and prepared to receive him. As the Great Sage went through the gate and looked inside he saw:

A hall full of brocade,

A room of awe – inspiring majesty.

All the monks were chanting the Lotus Sutra

While the aged head priest lightly struck the golden chime.

The offerings made to the Buddha

Were magic fruit and magic flowers;

Set out on tables

Were meatless delicacies.

Dazzling candles

Sent golden flames up to the rainbow,

From fragrant incense

Jade smoke rose to the translucent mist.

With the sermon over and the mind at peace, a trance was entered.

White clouds coiled around the tops of the pine trees.

When the sword of wisdom is sheathed, the demon is beheaded;

Great are the powers of the prajna – paramita.

The Bodhisattva straightened his clothes and came out to meet Monkey, who climbed the steps into the hall and sat in the guest's seat. When the orders were given for tea to be brought, Monkey said, "I won't trouble you to give me tea. My master is in trouble on the Yellow Wind Mountain, and I have come to ask you, Bodhisattva, to use your great powers to subdue the demon and rescue my master."

"I have been ordered by the Tathagata Buddha to guard over the Yellow Wind Monster," the Bodhisattva replied. "The Tathagata gave me a Wind–settling Pill and a Flying Dragon Staff. When I captured that monster before, the Tathagata spared his life and exiled him to live in seclusion on this mountain, where he is not allowed to kill or do any other evil. I never imagined that he would want to murder your master today. I must hold myself responsible for this as I have failed to carry out my orders." The Bodhisattva wanted to keep Monkey for a meal and a talk, but in response to Monkey's urgent pleading he took his Flying Dragon Staff and rode off with the Great Sage by cloud.

A moment later they reached the Yellow Wind Mountain, and the Bodhisattva said, "Great Sage, as this evil monster is a bit scared of me, I'd better stay here inside the cloud while you go down and challenge him to come out and fight. Once you've lured him out, I can use my divine power." Doing as he suggested, Monkey brought his cloud down to land; and without more ado he smashed down the gates of the cave with his iron cudgel.

"Fiendish monster," he shouted, "give my master back."

The junior fiends on the gate all rushed back to report this, and the old monster said, "That damned ape really has a cheek– –instead of behaving himself properly, he comes to smash my gates down. This time I'll use a magic wind that will certainly blow him to death." Putting on his armour and taking his trident as before, he went out through the gate, and the moment he saw Monkey, he thrust straight at his chest with his trident, not uttering a single word. Monkey sidestepped to dodge it and hit back at the monster's face with his cudgel.

When only a few rounds had been fought, the monster turned to the

Southeast and was just going to open his mouth and blow out a wind when the Bodhisattva Lingji appeared in mid—air and dropped the Flying Dragon Staff on him. While the monster recited all sorts of spells, an eight—clawed golden dragon grabbed him with two of its claws and smashed him several times against a rock—face. At this the monster reverted to his real form— —a brown marten.

Monkey rushed at it and had raised his cudgel to kill it when the Bodhisattva stopped him and said, "Don't kill it, Great Sage. I must take it back to see the Tathagata. He used to be a marten who had obtained the Way underneath the Vulture Peak, and once he stole some of the pure oil from a crystal lamp. When the lamp went out he was so afraid of being caught by a Vajrapani that he ran away and became a spirit monster here. The Tathagata decided that as this was not a capital offence I should be sent to keep guard over him; but if he took life or committed any other evil deeds he was to be taken to the Vulture Peak. As he has now offended you, Great Sage, and captured the Tang Priest with the intention of murdering him, I must take him to see the Tathagata to be sentenced for his crime before this business can be regarded as cleared up."

Pig, meanwhile, who had been wondering about Monkey as he waited in the wood, heard a shout from the mountainside, "Pig, bring the luggage and the horse out."

Recognizing the voice as Monkey's, the idiot rushed out of the wood with the things and asked Monkey,

"How did it go?"

"I asked the Bodhisattva Lingji to come, and he used his Flying Dragon Staff to capture the evil spirit, who turned out to have been the spirit of a brown—coated marten and was taken off to the Vulture Peak by the Bodhisattva to see the Buddha. We two had better go into the cave to rescue our master." The idiot was very pleased to hear the news.

The pair of them charged into the cave and killed all the evil hares, fox—fiends, roebuck, and deer inside with the iron club and the rake. Then they went into the garden at the back to rescue their master. When he was outside he asked, "How did you two capture that evil spirit? How did you manage to rescue me?" Monkey told him all about how Lingji had subdued the fined, and Sanzang expressed his gratitude at great length while Chapter 21

the two prepared a meal from the meatless food that there was in the cave. Then they left the cave and looked for the main path West once more.

If you don't know what happened later, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 22

Pig Fights a Great Battle in the Flowing Sands River

Moksa Obeys the Dharma and Wins Friar Sand Over

The story tells how the Tang Priest and his two disciples escaped from their troubles and pressed forward.

Before long they had crossed the Yellow Wind Ridge and were heading West across a plain. The time passed rapidly, and summer gave way to autumn. Cold cicadas sang in moulting willow trees, and the Great Fire Star sank below the Western horizon. As they were travelling one day they saw the mighty waves of a great river, boiling and raging. "Disciple," called out Sanzang from his horse, "do you see that broad river in front of us?

Why are there no boats on it, and how are we going to get across?"

"Those are really terrible waves," said Pig when he saw the river, "and there aren't any boats to ferry us over."

Monkey sprang into the sky, shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked. "Master," he said with horror, "we're in big trouble here. I can cross a river like this with a twist of my waist, but I'm afraid you'll never be able to cross it in ten thousand years."

"How wide is it, then?" Sanzang asked. "I can't see the other bank from here."

"About three hundred miles," Monkey replied. "How can you be so sure of the distance, brother?" Pig asked.

"These eyes of mine can see what's happening three hundred and fifty miles away in daytime," Monkey replied. "When I took a look from up in the air just now I couldn't make out the length of the river, but I could see that it was a good three hundred and fifty miles wide."

Depressed and worried, Sanzang reined in his horse and noticed a stone tablet beside the river. The three of them went to look at it, and they saw the words FLOWING SANDS RIVER inscribed on it in the ancient curly style. On the base of the tablet were four lines in the standard script:

"Three hundred miles of flowing sands,

Three thousand fathoms of weak water,

On which a goose feather will not float,

And the flower of a reed will sink."

As the three of them were looking at this tablet they heard the waves make a roar like a collapsing mountain as a most hideous evil spirit emerged from the water:

A head of matted hair, as red as fire,

A pair of staring eyes, gleaming like lamps.

An indigo face, neither black nor green,

A dragon's voice like drums or thunder.

On his body a cloak of yellow goose–down,

Tied at the waist with white creeper.

Nine skulls hung around his neck,

And in his hands was an enormous staff.

The monster came to the bank in a whirlwind and rushed straight at the Tang Priest. Monkey picked Sanzang up at once, turned, and made off up the high bank. Pig dropped his carrying–pole, grabbed his rake, and struck at the evil spirit, who parried the blow with his staff. Each of them showed his prowess on the banks of the Flowing Sands River, and it was a fine battle:

The nine – pronged rake,

And the ogre – quelling staff:

Two men fighting on the banks of the river.

One was the great commander Tian Peng

The other the banished Curtain – lifting General.

They used to meet in the Hall of Miraculous Mist,

But now they were locked in ferocious combat.

The rake had dug deep into clawed dragons,

The staff had defeated tusked elephants.

When either was held defensively, it was rock – solid;

In attack they cut into the wind.

While one clawed at head and face,

The other never panicked or left an opening.

One was the man – eating monster of the Flowing Sands River,

The other was a believer, a general cultivating his conduct.

The pair of them battled on for twenty rounds, but neither emerged as the victor. The Great Sage, who was holding on to the horse and looking after the luggage after carrying the Tang Priest to safety, became worked up into such a fury at the sight of Pig and the monster fighting that he ground his teeth and clenched his fists.

When he could hold himself back no longer, he pulled out his cudgel and said, "Master, you sit here and don't be afraid. I'm going to play with him." Ignoring Sanzang's pleas for him to stay, he whistled, jumped down to the side of the river, and found that the fight between Pig and the ogre was at its height. Brother Monkey swung his cudgel

and aimed it at the ogre's head, but the ogre made a lightning turn and plunged straight into the river. Pig was hopping mad.

"Nobody asked you to come, elder brother," he said. "That ogre was tiring and he could hardly fend my rake off. With few more rounds I would have captured him, but you gave him such a fright that he ran away, damn it."

"Brother," said Monkey with a smile, "I must tell you frankly that the sight of you fighting so beautifully gave me an uncontrollable itch. I haven't used my cudgel for a whole month since we came down the mountain after dealing with the Yellow Wind Monster——I just had to join in the fun. How was I to know that the monster wouldn't want to play and was going to run away?"

The two of them then clasped hands and went back talking and laughing to see Sanzang, who asked, "Did you catch the ogre?"

"No," Monkey said, "he couldn't take any more and dived back into the water."

"He has lived here for a long time, disciple," Sanzang said, "and must know the shallows and deeps here. We must have a water expert to lead us across this vast expanse of weak water that has no boats."

"Yes," said Monkey, "as the saying goes, 'What's near cinnabar goes red, and what's next to ink turns black.'

As that ogre lives here he must be a water expert, so if we catch him we shouldn't kill him——we should make him take you across, master, before finishing him off."

"There's no time to lose, brother," said Pig. "You go and catch him while I look after the master."

"This is something I can't talk big about," said Monkey with a smile. "I'm not all that good at underwater stuff.

Even to walk underwater I have to make a magic hand movement and recite a water—repelling spell before I can move. The only other way I can get about there is by turning myself into a fish, a shrimp, a crab or a turtle. I can manage any strange and wonderful magic on a mountain or in the clouds that you can do, but when it comes to underwater business, I'm useless."

"When I was the commander of the Milky Way, the heavenly river, in

the old days," said Pig, "I had a force of eighty thousand sailors, so I know a bit about water. But I'm afraid that he might have generations of clansmen down there, and that would be too much for me. And if they got me, we'd be in a real mess."

Chapter 22

317

Journey to the West

"You go into the water and start a fight with him there," said Monkey. "Don't fight hard, and don't win. You must lose and lure him out, then I can finish him off for you."

"Very well then, I'll be off," said Pig. After stripping off his brocade tunic and removing his shoes he swung his rake in both hands and made his way into the water, where the tricks he had learned years back enabled him to go through the waves to the river—bed, across which he advanced.

The ogre had now recovered his breath after his earlier defeat, and when he heard someone pushing the waters aside he leapt to his feet to look. Seeing that it was Pig brandishing his rake, the monster raised his staff and shouted at him, "Where do you think you're going, monk? Watch out, and take this."

Pig warded off the blow with his rake and replied. "Who are you, evil spirit, and why are you blocking the way?"

"You may not realize who I am," the monster replied, "but I'm no fiend, demon, ghost or monster, and I don't lack a name either."

"If you're not a fiend, a demon, or a monster, then why do you live here taking life? Tell me your name truthfully and I'll spare you life."

"I," the monster replied,

"Have had a divine essence since childhood,

And have wandered all over heaven and earth.

I have won glory among the heroes of the world,

And brave knights have taken me as their model.

I traveled at will over countries and continents,

Going where I liked in lakes and seas,

To study the Way I went to the edge of the heavens,

And I roamed the wastes in search of teachers.

In those days I had a cassock and an alms – bowl,

And I kept my mind and spirit well controlled.

I traveled the earth by cloud some dozen times,

Visiting everywhere on a hundred journeys.

Chapter 22

318

Journey to the West

The Immortal I finally managed to find

Led me along the great and shining Way.

First I gathered mercury and lead,

Then I let go of the Mother of Wood and Metal's Father.

The kidney – water behind my brow entered my mouth,

And the liver – fire in my windpipes entered my heart.

With three thousand accomplishment won,

I bowed to the heavenly countenance;

Piously I worshipped him in his glory.

The Great Jade Emperor then promoted me

To be the General Who Lifts the Curtain.

I was honoured within the Southern Gate of Heaven,

Supreme before the Hall of Miraculous Mist.

At my waist was hung the tiger tally,

In my hand I held my demon – quelling staff.

My golden helmet shone like sunlight,

On my body gleamed a suit of armour.

I led the escort for the Emperor's carriage,

Always took precedence when he entered or left court.

But then the Queen Mother gathered the peaches

And invited all the generals to feast at the Jade Pool.

I carelessly smashed some jade and crystal,

To the horror of all of the heavenly gods.

The Jade Emperor in his terrible fury

Put his hands together and fumed to the vice – premier.

My hat and armour were removed, and I was stripped of office,

Then marched to the place of execution.

Then, to my good fortune, the great Bare – foot Immortal

Stepped forward to ask for my reprieve.

Death was commuted; I was allowed to live

In exile on the East bank of the Flowing Sands River.

When well – fed I sleep in the river waters;

When hungry I burst through the waves in search of food.

If a woodcutter meets me his life is finished – –

No fisherman sees me and survives.

In one way and another I've eaten many a man,

Cloaked as I am in an aura of death.

As you've dared to come to make trouble at my gates

My belly has something to look forward to today.

No matter if you're coarse and don't taste good,

When I've caught you I can cut you up for salted mince."

Chapter 22

Pig was extremely angry to hear this, and he replied, "You're completely blind, wretch. I can catch bubbles in my fingers, so how dare you say that I'm so coarse you'll cut me up for salted mince? So you take me to be a very well－cured side of ham! Don't be impudent －－take a dose of this rake." When the monster saw the rake coming at him he did a "phoenix nod" to avoid it. The two of them fought their way up to the surface of the water, where each of them trod on the waves as they struggled in a combat that was even fiercer than their previous one.

The Curtain－lifting General,

And Marshal Tian Peng;

Each gave a splendid show of magic powers.

The ogre－quelling staff wheels around the head,

The nine－pronged rake is swift in the hand.

As they leap on the waves, they shake hills and rivers,

Darkening the world as they push the waters aside,

As terrible as the Disaster Star striking banners and pendants, As frightening as lifting the canopy off the Death Star.

One was the loyal defender of the Tang Priest,

The other, a criminal, was an ogre of the waters.

Where the rake struck it left nine scars;

When the staff smote, all the souls were scattered.

Cheerfully fighting for all they were worth,

They put all their hearts into the combat.

Although he is only a pilgrim fetching scriptures

His unrestrained anger bursts against the sky.

Such was the chaos that the fishes lost their scales,

While the soft shells of terrapins were crushed;

Red prawns and purple crabs all lost their lives,

And all the gods of the water palace prayed to heaven.

Chapter 22

321

Journey to the West

The only sound was the thunder of crashing waves;

Sun and moon were dark, to the horror of earth and sky.

They battled on for four hours, but the issue was still undecided. It was as if a brass pan was fighting an iron brush, or a jade chime was competing with a golden bell.

The Great Sage, who was standing beside the Tang Priest to guard him, watched the fight on the water with longing, unable to do anything. Then Pig feinted with his rake, pretended to be beaten, and made for the Eastern bank with the ogre rushing after him. When he had almost reached the bank, Monkey could hold himself back no longer. Abandoning his master, he sprang down to the river's edge with his cudgel in his hand and took a swing at the ogre's head. Not daring to face him, the monster went straight back into the river.

"Protector of the Horses," Pig shouted, "you impatient ape. You should have taken it a bit more slowly and waited till I'd drawn him up to

high ground, and then cut him off from the river – bank. Then he wouldn't have been able to go back and we'd have caught him. But now he's gone back in, he'll never come out again."

"Don't shout, idiot," Monkey said with a smile, "don't shout. Let's go back and see our master."

When Pig reached the top of the bank with Monkey, Sanzang bowed to him and said, "You've had a tough time, disciple."

"I wouldn't say that," Pig replied. "But if we'd captured that evil spirit and made him take you across the river, that would have been the perfect solution."

"How did your battle with the evil spirit go?" Sanzang asked.

"He's as good as me," Pig replied. "When I pretended to be beaten in the fight he chased me to the river's edge; but then he saw elder brother waving his cudgel, so he ran away."

"So what are we going to do?" Sanzang asked.

"Relax, master," said Monkey, "there's no need to worry. It's getting late, so you'd better sit on the bank while I go and beg some food. When you've eaten that you can go to sleep, and we can decide what to do tomorrow morning."

"Good idea," said Pig. "Be as quick as you can."

Monkey leapt up on his cloud, went due North to a house where he begged some food, and came back to give it to his master. Seeing him come back so soon, Sanzang said to him, "Monkey, let's go to the house where you begged this food and ask them how to cross this river. That would be better than having to fight this ogre."

"But that house is a long way away," laughed Monkey. "It's about two thousand miles from here. What would be the point in asking them about this river? They wouldn't know anything about it."

"You're telling tall stories again," Pig said. "If it's two thousand miles away, how did you get there and back so fast?"

Chapter 22

"You wouldn't know, of course," Brother Monkey replied, "that my somersault cloud can cover thirty – six thousand miles with a single bound. To do a mere two – thousand – mile return journey takes only a couple of nods and a bow – – there's nothing to it."

"If it's so easy, brother," said Pig, "you should carry the master on your back, take him across with just a couple of nods and a bow, and save us all the trouble of fighting the monster."

"You can ride clouds, can't you?" said Monkey. "Why don't you carry the master across?"

"The master's mortal flesh and bones are heavier than Mount Tai," said Pig, "So although I can ride clouds I could never lift him. Nothing but your somersault will do the trick."

"My somersault is the same as cloud – riding." Monkey said, "except that it takes you further. I'm no more able to carry him than you are. As the old saying goes, 'Mount Tai is as easy to move as a mustard seed, but a mortal cannot be dragged away from the earthly dust.' When that other poisonous monster of a fiend made a magic wind I could only move the master by dragging and tugging him along the ground. Of course. I can do tricks like that, and all those other ones like making myself invisible or shrinking land. But although our master cannot escape from the sea of suffering he wants to go to a foreign land, so he finds every inch of the way heavy going. All we can do is escort him and see that he comes to no harm. We can't undergo all that suffering on his behalf, nor can we fetch the scriptures for him. Even if we went ahead to see the Buddha, he wouldn't give the scriptures to you or me. After all, if we could get them that easily, we'd have nothing to do."

The idiot accepted everything Monkey said, then they ate some plain rice without any vegetables, after which the three of them went to sleep on the Eastern bank of the Flowing Sands River.

"Monkey," said Sanzang the next morning, "what are we going to do about it today?"

"There's nothing for it but to send Pig back under the water," Monkey replied. "You're making me go underwater because you want to stay dry, brother," Pig protested. "I won't be impatient this time," Monkey said. "I'll let you lure him out onto the bank and then I'll cut him off from the river. That way we'll be bound to catch him."

Dear Pig rubbed his face, summoned up his energy, took his rake in

both hands, went down to the river, and parted the waters as he went back to the monster's lair once more. The ogre, who had only just woken up, turned to see what was happening the moment he heard the waters being pushed apart. Observing that a rake – wielding Pig was upon him, he sprang to his feet to stop him, shouting, "Not so fast, not so fast. Take this." Pig blocked the blow from the staff with his rake and said, "What do you mean by telling your ancestor to 'take this' from that mourner's staff of yours?"

"You know nothing, you wretch," the monster replied, continuing:

"Great is the fame of this staff of mine,

Made from a Sala tree on the moon.

Wu Gang cut down a branch of it,

For Lu Ban to work with his unrivalled skill.

A strip of gold goes right through its heart,

And it is set with countless pearls.

It is a precious staff, fine for subduing fiends;

It could quell all demons when it guarded the Heavenly Palace.

When I was commissioned as High General

The Jade Emperor gave it me to use.

It can be any length I wish,

Thick or thin, responding to my will.

It protected the Emperor at Peach Banquets,

Attended at court in the upper world.

When I was at the palace, it met all the sages,

When I lifted the curtain, it greeted the Immortals.

I nurtured it and made it a divine weapon— —

This is no ordinary earthly arm.

When I was sent down from Heaven in exile

I roamed at will throughout the world.

I do not need to boast about this staff,

Unmatched by any spear or saber in the world.

Look at that rusty rake of yours,

Only good for farming or growing vegetables."

"I'll give you the beating you deserve, damn you," said Pig. "Never mind about vegetable—growing— —one swipe from it and you'll have nowhere left to put ointment, because your blood will be pouring out from nine holes. Even if it doesn't kill you, you'll have tetanus for the rest of your days." The ogre dropped his defensive posture and fought with Pig from the river—bed to the surface of the water. This battle was fiercer than the earlier ones:

The precious staff whirled,

The deadly rake struck,

And no word passed between the two foes.

Because the Mother of Wood conquered the Medicine Measure

The pair of them had to fight each other twice.

With no victory,

And no defeat,

The waves were overturned and knew no peace.

How could the one hold back his anger?

How could the other bear his humiliation?

As the staff parried the rake's blows, they showed their prowess; Each was most vicious as the Flowing Sands River rolled.

Towering rage,

Strenuous efforts,

All because Sanzang wanted to go West.

The rake was thoroughly murderous,

The staff was wielded with experience.

Pig grabbed his enemy, trying to drag him ashore,

While the other in torn tried to pull Pig under water.

The thunderous noise disturbed fish and dragons;

Gods and ghosts lay low as the sky was darkened.

Chapter 22

325

Journey to the West

The battle went on for thirty rounds, but neither emerged victorious. Pig feigned defeat once again, and fled trailing his rake behind him. The ogre charged through the waves after him as far as the bank, when Pig shouted at him, "I'll get you, you damned ogre. Come up on this higher ground where we can fight with dry land under our feet."

"You're trying to lure me up there, damn you," the monster replied, "for your mate to come and get me. Come back and fight in the water." The fiend, who had more sense than to go up the bank again, stood at the river's edge, shouting it out with Pig.

When Monkey saw that the monster was not coming up on the bank he seethed with frustration at not being able to catch him. "Master," he said, "you sit here while I do a 'Hungry Eagle Falling on Its Prey' on him." He somersaulted into mid—air, then plummeted down to catch the ogre, who heard the noise of a wind as he was yelling at Pig, turned immediately, and saw Monkey descending from the clouds. He put his staff away, plunged into the water with a splash, and was seen

no more. "Brother," said Monkey to Pig as he landed on the bank, "the monster's made a smooth getaway. Whatever are we to do if he won't come on to the bank again?"

"It's impossible," said Pig, "We'll never be able to beat him. Even if I put everything I've got into it, I can only hold my own against him."

"Let's go and see the master," Monkey said.

The two of them climbed the bank and told the Tang Priest about the difficulty of capturing the ogre. "It's so hard," said Sanzang, tears streaming down his cheeks. "However are we going to cross?"

"No need to worry, master," said Monkey. "The monster is lurking deep down on the river–bed, where it's very hard to move around. You stay here and look after the master, Pig, and don't fight with the ogre again.

I'm going to the Southern Sea."

"What for?" Pig asked. "This whole business of fetching the scriptures was started by the Bodhisattva Guanyin, and it was she who converted us. Now we are stuck here at the Flowing Sands River nobody but she can sort this one out. With her help we'll be in a stronger position to fight that monster."

"Yes, yes," said Pig, "and when you're there, please thank her for converting me."

"If you're going to ask the Bodhisattva to come," Sanzang said, "don't waste a moment, and be back as quickly as possible."

Monkey then somersaulted off on his cloud towards the Southern Sea, and before an hour was up he saw Potaraka Island. An instant later he landed outside the Purple Bamboo Grove, where the twenty–four devas came forward to greet him with the words, "Why have you come, Great Sage?"

"Because my master is in trouble," Monkey replied, "I have come for an audience with the Bodhisattva." The deva on duty that day asked Monkey to sit down while he went in to report, whereupon he went into the Tide Cave to announce that Sun Wukong was seeking an audience on business. The Bodhisattva was leaning on a balcony looking at the blossoms in the Precious Lotus Pool with the Dragon Princess Peng Zhu when she heard the news. She went back in her cloudy majesty, opening the door and summoning Monkey to her

presence. The Great Sage greeted her with grave reverence.

"Why aren't you looking after the Tang Priest," she asked, "and why have you come to see me.?"

"My master won a new disciple at Gao Village, Bodhisattva," Brother Monkey reported. "He's called Zhu Bajie and also has the Buddhist name Wuneng thanks to you. We have now reached the Flowing Sands River after crossing the Yellow Wind Ridge, but it's a thousand miles of Ruo River and my master cannot cross it.

On top of this there's an evil monster in the river who's a great fighter, and although our Pig had three great battles with him on the surface of the water, he couldn't beat the ogre, who is still blocking our way and preventing my master from crossing. This is why I've come to see you and ask you in your mercy to help him across."

"You have revealed your conceit once again, you ape," said the Bodhisattva. "Why didn't you tell the monster that you were protecting the Tang Priest?"

"We wanted to catch him," Monkey replied, "and make him take our master across the river. As I'm not up to much in the water, Pig was the only one who could find the ogre's den and did all the talking. I expect he never mentioned fetching the scriptures."

"The ogre of the Flowing Sands River is the mortal incarnation of the Great Curtain－lifting General," said Guanyin, "and is a believer whom I converted myself and instructed to protect those who would be coming to fetch the scriptures. If you had told him that you had come from the East to fetch the scriptures, so far from fighting you, he would certainly have joined you."

"But the craven monster is now skulking in the river, too frightened to come out," Monkey said, "so how are we to make him join us, and how is my master to cross the weak water?"

The Bodhisattva sent for her disciple Huian and produced a red bottle －gourd from her sleeve. "Take this gourd," she said, "and go with Sun Wukong to the Flowing Sands River. Shout 'Wujing'－ －'Awakened to

Purity' — —and he'll come out. First take him to submit to the Tang Priest, and then make him thread his nine skulls on a string like the Sacred Palaces. If he puts this gourd in the middle of them, it will make a dharma boat to ferry the Tang Priest across the river." In obedience to the Bodhisattva's command, Huian and the Great Sage took the gourd with them from the Tide Cave and the Purple Bamboo Grove. There are some lines to describe it:

The Five Elements were combined with the heavenly Immortal,

Recognizing their master of the old days.

They have been sufficiently refined to achieve great things;

When true and false are distinguished, origins are seen.

When Metal joins Nature, like joins like;

When Wood seeks the Passions, both are lost.

When the two Earths achieve nirvana,

Fire and Water will combine, and worldly dust be no more.

Chapter 22

A little later the pair of them brought their clouds down to land on the bank of the Flowing Sands River.

Recognizing Huian as Moksa the Novice, Pig led his master forward to meet him. When Moksa had exchanged courtesies with Sanzang, he greeted Pig.

Then Pig said, "Thanks to Your Holiness's instruction, I was able to meet the Bodhisattva, and since then I have obeyed the Buddhist law and had the pleasure of becoming a monk. As I have been travelling since then, I've been too busy to go and thank you. Please forgive me."

"Don't be so longwinded," said Monkey. "Let's go and call to that wretch."

"Call to whom?" asked Sanzang. "I saw the Bodhisattva," said Monkey, "and told her what had happened. She said that the ogre of the

Flowing Sands River is the mortal incarnation of the Great Curtain—lifting General, who was thrown down to this river as a monster because of a crime he had committed in Heaven. He has been converted by the Bodhisattva and has vowed to go to the Western Heaven with you. If we'd told him we were going to fetch the scriptures, there would have been none of this bitter fighting. The Bodhisattva has now sent Moksa to give this gourd to that fellow to make a dharma boat that will ferry you across." Sanzang bowed in reverence to the Bodhisattva many times when he heard it, and also bowed to Moksa with the words, "Please do this as quickly as you can, Your Holiness." Moksa then went by cloud and stood over the river with the gourd in his hands.

"Wujing, Wujing," he shouted at the top of his voice, "the pilgrims who are going to fetch the scriptures have been here for a long time. Why haven't you submitted to them?"

The ogre, who had gone back to the river—bed for fear of the Monkey King, was resting in his den when he heard his Buddhist name being called and realized that this was a message from the Bodhisattva Guanyin. On hearing that the pilgrims were there, his fears of being attacked melted away, and he pushed his head up through the waves to see that it was Moksa the Novice. Look at him as he bows to Moksa, his face wreathed in smiles. "I'm sorry I did not welcome you properly, Your Holiness," he said. "Where is the Bodhisattva?"

"She didn't come," Moksa replied. "She sent me to tell you to be the Tang Priest's disciple. You are to take the nine skulls you wear round your neck, arrange them with this gourd in the pattern of the Nine Sacred Palaces, and make a dharma boat to ferry him across this weak water."

"Where is the pilgrim?" Wujing asked.

"There he is, sitting on the bank," said Moksa, pointing at Sanzang.

Wujing then noticed Pig and said, "I don't know where that bloody creature is from, but he fought with me for two whole days and never said a word about fetching scriptures. And as for this one," he added, noticing Monkey, "he's that one's accomplice and a real terror. I'm not going with them."

"That one is Zhu Bajie, and this one is Brother Monkey. They are both disciples of the Tang Priest who have been converted by the Bodhisattva, so you have nothing to fear from them. Let me present

you to the Tang Priest." Wujing put away his staff, straightened his yellow brocade tunic, jumped ashore, knelt before the Tang Priest, and said, "Master, your disciple's eyes have no pupils in them— —I beg you to forgive me for attacking your followers instead of recognizing who they were."

"You pustule," said Pig, "why did you fight me instead of submitting? What did you mean by it?"

"You can't blame him, brother," said Monkey. "We didn't tell him our names or even mention fetching the scriptures."

"Do you believe in our teachings with all your heart?" Sanzang asked.

"I was converted by the Bodhisattva," Wujing replied, "and she gave me this river's name as a surname and called me by the Buddhist name of Sha Wujing, or Sand Awakened to Purity, so of course I must follow you, master."

"In that case," said Sanzang, "bring the razor over, Monkey, and cut his hair off." The Great Sage obediently shaved the monster's head, who then bowed to Sanzang, Monkey, and Pig with appropriate degrees of reverence. When Sanzang saw him do this just like a real monk he gave him another name— —Friar Sand.

"Now that you have entered the faith," said Moksa, "there's no need to waste time talking. Make that dharma boat at once."

Friar Sand took the skulls from round his neck without delay and tied them into the pattern of the Nine Palaces with the Bodhisattva's gourd in the middle. Then he asked Sanzang to board it, and Sanzang found when he sat on it that it was as stable as a small dinghy. Pig and Friar San supported him to left and right, while Monkey led the dragon horse through the clouds behind him, and Moksa stood above him on guard.

Sanzang thus made a calm and windless crossing of the weak water of the Flowing Sands River. He moved with the speed of an arrow, and it was not long before he climbed ashore on the other side. He was neither wet nor muddy, and his hands and feet were completely dry.

Thus it was that master and disciples trod on dry land again without any trouble. Moksa then landed his cloud, and took back the gourd. The nine skulls changed into nine gusts of wind and disappeared. Sanzang bowed to Moksa to thank him and worshipped the Bodhisattva, after which

Moksa returned to the Eastern Ocean,

While Sanzang remounted and headed West.

If you don't know when they won their reward and fetched the scriptures, listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

Chapter 23

Sanzang Does Not Forget the Basic

The Four Holy Ones Have Their Piety Tested

Long is the road as they travel West;

In the rustling autumn breeze the frost—killed flowers fall.

The cunning ape is firmly chained——do not untie him;

The wicked horse is tightly reined——don't whip him on.

The Mother of Wood and Father of Metal were originally combined;
Between the Yellow Mother and the Red Babe there was no difference.

When the iron pill is bitten open, truth is revealed;

The Prajna—paramita has reached that person.

Although this book is about the journey to fetch the scriptures, it never leaves the subject of how the individual strives for the basic. The four of them, having understood the truth, shaken off the chains of the mortal world, and leapt away from the flowing sands of the sea of nature, headed along the main road West free of all impediment. They crossed blue mountains and green rivers, and saw no end of wild flowers. The time flew by, and before long it was autumn. They saw:

Hills covered with red maple leaves,

Yellow chrysanthemums braving the evening breeze,

Aging cicadas singing with less vigor,

Autumn crickets longing for the days of plenty.

The lotus was losing its green silken leaves,

The fragrant orange tree was massed with golden globes.

Lines of wild geese, alas,

Spread out like dots across the distant sky.

As they were travelling along one day, evening drew in, and Sanzang said, "Where are we going to sleep, disciples, now that it's getting late?"

"That's not the right thing to say, master," said Monkey. "We monks are supposed to eat the wind and drink the rain, and sleep under the moon and in the frost. Our home is wherever we are. So why ask where we're going to sleep?"

"You may think that you've had an easy journey," said Pig, "but you don't give a damn about other people being tired. Ever since we crossed the Flowing Sands River we've been going over mountain ranges, and this heavy load has fairly worn me out. We've got to find a house where we can beg some tea and food and have a good rest— —it's only fair."

"It sounds to me, idiot, as though you're having regrets," said Monkey. "I'm afraid you can't have such an easy life now as you did back in Gao Village. If you want to be a monk, you have to suffer— —it's the only way of being a true disciple."

"How heavy do you think this load is?" Pig asked.

"I haven't carried it since you and Friar Sand joined us, so how should I know?" Monkey replied.

"Just add it up," said Pig. "There are

Four bundles wrapped in yellow bamboo mats,

Eight ropes of assorted lengths.

Then, to keep out rain and damp,

Three or four layers of felt around it

The carrying – pole is terrible slippery

With nails at either end.

Then there's a bronze and iron nine – ringed staff

And a cape made of bamboo and creeper.

With all this luggage to carry day after day of course I find the going heavy. While you're allowed to be the master's disciple, I'm treated as a hired hand."

"Who do you think you're talking to, idiot?" Monkey asked.

"I'm talking to you, elder brother," said Pig.

"You shouldn't be complaining about this to me," Monkey replied. "My job is to look after the master's safety, while you and Friar Sand look after the horse and the luggage. And if there's any slacking from you, you'll feel a heavy stick about you ankles."

"Don't threaten me with a beating, brother," said Pig, "that would be bullying. I know that you're too high and mighty to carry the luggage, but the master's horse is a big, sturdy animal to be carrying only one old monk.

I'd be very happy if it could carry a few pieces of luggage."

"Do you think he's a horse?" Monkey asked. "He's no ordinary horse. He was the son of Ao Run, the Dragon King of the Western Sea, and his name is Prince Dragon – horse. Because he burnt the palace pearls his father reported on him as an offender against the Heavenly Code. Luckily for him, his life saved by the Bodhisattva Guanyin, and he waited a long time for the master in the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge. He was honoured by another visit from the Bodhisattva, who took off his scales and horns, removed the pearls from under his neck, and turned him into this horse, which has sworn to carry the master to the

This is a matter of him winning merit for himself, so you'd better leave him alone."

"Is he really a dragon?" asked Friar Sand when he heard this.

"Yes," Monkey replied.

"I've heard an old saying," Pig remarked, "that dragons can breathe out clouds, make the dust and sand fly, pull mountain ranges up by their roots, and turn oceans upside down. How is it that he's moving so slowly now?"

"If you want to see him go fast," Monkey replied, "I'll make him go fast for you." The splendid Great Sage gripped his iron cudgel, and countless luminous clouds sprang from it. When the horse saw him grab the cudgel he thought he was going to be hit with it, and in his terror he shot off at the speed of lightning. Sanzang was too weak to rein him in as the equine dashed up the mountainside for all his evil nature was worth before he slackened his pace. When Sanzang began to get his breath back, he looked up and saw some fine houses in the shade of a bamboo grove:

Cypresses were bending over the gates

Of the houses near the blue mountain.

There were several spreading pines

And some molded bamboo.

Wild chrysanthemum outside the fence, beautiful in the frost;

The orchid by the bridge reflected red in the water.

A whitewashed, plastered wall

Surrounded it.

Handsome was the lofty hall,

Peaceful the main building.

There was no sign of oxen or sheep, or chickens, or dogs;

It seemed to be the slack season after harvest.

Sanzang stopped the horse to take a longer look, and then he saw Monkey and the others arrive. "You didn't fall off the horse, master?" asked Monkey.

"You gave this horse a terrible fright, you filthy ape," Sanzang said, "but I kept my seat."

"Don't tell me off, master," said Monkey, putting on a smile. "It was only because Pig said the horse was going too slowly that I made him speed up a bit."

The blockhead Pig, who had been running quite fast after the horse, was puffing and panting as he mumbled,

"Enough of this. When you're bent double you can't relax. Although I'm carrying a load so heavy I can't pick it up, you make me go running after the horse."

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "do you see the farm over there? Let's ask if we can spend the night there." Monkey immediately looked up, saw that the sky above it was full of clouds of blessing, and knew that the farm had been miraculously produced by the Buddha or some Immortals.

Not daring to give away the secrets of Heaven, however, he only said, "Splendid, splendid, let's ask if we can lodge there." Dismounting from his horse, Sanzang saw a gate—house with pillars like elephants' trunks and beams that had been painted and carved.

Friar Sand put down the carrying—pole and Pig said as he held the horse, "This is a very wealthy house."

Monkey was on the point of going in when Sanzang said, "No, we men of religion should avoid incurring suspicion. You mustn't go charging in. We should wait till somebody comes out and then ask politely for

lodging." Pig tethered the horse at the sloping base of the wall while Sanzang sat on a stone stool, and Friar Sand and Monkey sat beside the steps. When nobody appeared for a long time Monkey jumped up impatiently and went through the gate to have a look. He saw a large hall facing South whose tall windows were shaded with bamboo curtains. Over the doorway dividing the inner and outer parts of the house was a horizontal landscape painting symbolizing long life and blessings, and on the gold－painted columns flanking the door was pasted a pair of scrolls reading:

"The tender willow leaves sway in the evening by the bridge; When the plum－blossom looks like snowflakes it is spring in the courtyard.

In the middle of the room was an incense table whose black lacquer had been polished, an ancient animal－shaped bronze incense －burner standing on it, and six chairs. Pictures of the four seasons were hung on the walls at either end of the hall.

As Monkey was peeping inside he heard footsteps from behind the door at the back. A woman, neither old nor young, came out, and asked in a charming voice, "Who has forced his way into this widow's house of mine?"

The Great Sage hastened to greet her respectfully and say, "I am a humble monk from the Great Tang in the East, under imperial orders to go to the West to worship the Buddha and ask for the scriptures. There are four of us altogether, and since our journey has brought us this way as evening is drawing in, we have come to your mansion, divine patroness, to beg for a night's lodging."

She returned his greeting with a smile and said, "Where are the other three gentlemen, venerable sir?" at which Monkey shouted, "Master, come in." Sanzang, Pig and Friar Sand then came in, bringing the horse and the luggage with them. As the woman came out of the hall to welcome them, Pig stole a glance at her with greedy eyes.

Chapter 23

She wore a green silk gown,

And over it a pale red jacket;

A skirt of yellow brocade,

Below which showed thick – soled shoes.

Her fashionable coiffure was veiled in black,

Which suited her graying locks, coiled like a dragon;

Palace – style ivory combs shone with red and green,

And two golden pins adorned her hair.

Her half – grey tresses soared like a phoenix in flight,

Two rows of pearls hung from her ear – rings.

Free of powder and paint, her beauty was natural;

She was as attractive as a younger girl.

When she saw the three others she was more pleased than ever, and she invited them into the main room.

When all the introductions had been made, she asked them to sit down and have some tea. A servant girl with her hair in plaits came in through the door leading to the back of the house; she was carrying a golden tray on which were set white jade cups of steaming hot tea as well as exotic fruits that smelt delicious. Her sleeves were wide, and with her fingers as slender as bamboo shoots in spring she handed each of them a jade bowl and bowed. When the tea had been drunk, the mistress ordered a meatless meal to be prepared.

"What is your name, venerable Bodhisattva?" asked Sanzang, spreading out his hands. "And what is this place called?"

"This is the Western Continent of Cattle – gift, or Godaniya," she replied. "My maiden name is Jia and my husband's name was Mo. In my childhood I had the misfortune of losing both my parents, and I married to continue the ancestral enterprise. Our family is worth ten thousand strings of cash, and we own fifteen thousand acres of good arable land. We were not fated to be given sons, and we only had three daughters. The year before last I suffered the great misfortune of losing my husband. I have remained a widow, and this year I have come out of mourning. There are no other relations to inherit the family estate besides myself and my daughters. I would like to remarry, but not at the price of abandoning the estate. Now that you

have come here, venerable sir, with your three disciples, I think it should be you. I and my three daughters want to marry while staying at home, and you four gentlemen would suit us nicely. I wonder if you would be prepared to consent." Sanzang sat there pretending to be deaf and dumb, with his eyes shut and his mind kept calm. He made no reply.

"We have over four thousand acres each of irrigated land, dry land, and orchards on hillsides," she continued,

"as well as over a thousand head of oxen and water buffalo, herds of mules and horses, and more pigs and sheep than you could count. There are sixty or seventy farm buildings and barns. We have more grain in the house than we could eat in eight or nine years, and more than enough silk to clothe us for a decade— —to say nothing of more gold and silver than you could spend in a lifetime. You'll be even better off than those ancients who 'stored spring behind brocade curtains' and kept girls whose 'hair was heavy with golden pins'. If you and your disciples are prepared to change your minds and live in this house as our husbands, you can enjoy wealth and ease. Wouldn't that be better than a difficult journey to the West?" Sanzang sat there silent, as if he were an imbecile.

"I was born at the hour *you* of the third day of the third month of the year *dinghai, "* she continued. "My late husband was three years older than me, and I am now forty—four. My eldest daughter, Zhenzhen, is nineteen; my second, Aiai is seventeen; and Lianlian, the youngest, is fifteen. None of them have been betrothed.

Although I am rather ugly myself, the girls are all quite good —looking, and they have all the feminine accomplishments. As my late husband had no sons, he gave them a boy's education, teaching them to read the Confucian classics from an early age and training them to recite poems and make couplets. Although they live in this mountain farmhouse you couldn't consider them boorish, and I think that they would be good partners for all you reverend gentlemen. If you are willing to broaden your outlook and let your hair grow, you could be head of the family and wear silks and brocades. Wouldn't that be far better than your earthenware begging—bowl, rough

clothes, straw sandals, and rain – hats?"

Sanzang sat in the place of honour as still as a child terrified by thunder or a toad soaked in a rainstorm. He seemed to be in a trance as he leant back with his eyes turned up towards the sky. Pig, however, felt an itch in his mind that was hard to scratch when he heard about all this wealth and beauty. He fidgeted on his chair as if needles were being stuck into his backside, and finally could bear it no longer.

He went up to his master, tugged at his clothes, and said, "Master, why are you paying no attention to what the lady is saying? You really ought to take some notice." Sanzang glared at him angrily, made a furious noise, and shouted at him to go away.

"Evil beast," he said, "We are men of religion. It's disgraceful to allow yourself to be moved by the thought of wealth, honour or sex."

"Poor, poor things," said the woman with a smile. "What good can there be in being men of religion?"

"What good can there be in being of the world, Bodhisattva?" Sanzang replied.

"Please sit down, reverend sir, while I tell you about the advantages of being in the world," she said. "There is a poem to describe them that goes:

In spring we cut out linked diamond patterns and wear new silk; In summer we change to light gauze and admire the lotus;

In autumn comes meat and delicious rice – wine,

In winter the house is warm, and our faces are red with drink.

We have all that's needed in the four seasons,

The treasures and delicacies of the whole year.

Brocade clothes, silken sheets and a wedding night

Are better than plodding along and worshipping Maitreya."

"Bodhisattva," said Sanzang, "it is, of course, very good to enjoy wealth and honour with plenty of food and clothes and a family. But what you don't realize is that the religious life has advantages, which are described in this poem:

It is no light matter to decide to enter religion:

You have to demolish the love and gratitude you felt before.

Externals are created no longer, and your mouth is tightly shut.

Negative and positive exist within your body.

When all has been achieved, you face the golden gates;

See your nature, clarify your mind, and return home.

This is better than staying in the world to be greedy for blood and food While your stinking flesh grows aged and decrepit."

"You insolent monk," the woman said in great anger. "If it weren't for the fact that you've come a long, long way from the East. I'd drive you out of my house. I invite you four with all sincerity to marry us and enjoy our wealth, and you repay my kindness with insults. If you have accepted the prohibitions and made your vows, you could at least let me have one of your underlings as a son—in—law. Why are you being such a stickler for the rules?"

As she had lost her temper, Sanzang had to soothe her, so he said, "Monkey, you stay here."

"I've never been able to do that sort of thing," Monkey replied.

"Why not let Pig stay?"

"Stop teasing, elder brother," Pig said. "We should all decide what's the best thing to do."

Chapter 23

"If neither of you will stay, I must ask Friar Sand to stay," said

Sanzang; but Friar Sand replied, "What a thing to say, master. I was converted by the Bodhisattva, agreed to obey the prohibitions, and waited till you came, and since taking me as your disciple you've taught me more. I haven't been with you for two months yet, and I've had no time to win any merit at all. How could I possibly want wealth and position? I want to go to the Western Heaven even if it costs me my life, and I'm certainly not going to frustrate my hopes by doing that."

In the face of their refusals the woman turned round, went out through the door leading to the back of the house, and slammed it behind her, leaving master and disciples outside with neither food nor tea. Nobody else came out to see them.

"That's not the way to handle things, master," grumbled an angry Pig. "You should have been more flexible and given her some noncommittal answer, then you'd have got some food out of her. That way we'd have eaten well tonight, but would still have been able to refuse to marry them in the morning. We're going to have a lousy night with nothing to eat if that inside door is shut and nobody comes out to us."

"Brother Pig, you should stay here and marry one of the girls," said Friar Sand.

"Lay off me," Pig replied. "We must decide what's the best thing to do."

"Why bother?" said Monkey. "If you want to marry one of them, you'll make our master and the woman in-laws, and you can be a husband living with his in-laws. A family as rich as this is bound to give a good dowry, as well as a feast for relations which will do us all a bit of good. So it's in all our interests for you to return to worldly life here."

"It sounds all right," said Pig, "but it would mean going back to the world after leaving it, and marrying again after ending another marriage."

"Did you have a wife before, then?" asked Friar Sand.

"So you still don't know," said Monkey, "that he used to be the son-in-law of Squire Gao in Gao Village in the land of Stubet. After I defeated him and the Bodhisattva converted him and made him promise to observe the prohibitions, we managed to force him to become a monk. So he left his wife and joined our master for the journey to the Buddha in the West. I think that now he's been away from her for so long he's remembering all that business again. When

he heard this woman's offer, it revived his old ideas. Blockhead," he continued, addressing Pig, "marry into this family as a son – in – law. I won't report on you provided you bow to me a few times."

"Nonsense, Nonsense," said Pig. "You've all been thinking the same thoughts, but you pick on me to make an exhibition of. It's always said that 'a monk among pretty women is a hungry ghost,' and that goes for all of us.

But by acting so high and mighty you've ruined our chances of doing well here. We haven't cast our eyes on so much as a cup of tea, and there isn't even anyone to light the lamps for us. We may be able to stick it out for a night, but that horse will have to carry our master again tomorrow, and if he gets nothing to eat all night he'll collapse. You lot sit here while I take him out for a feed." He untied the animal and dragged it out in a great hurry, at which Monkey said, "Friar Sand, you sit here with the master while I follow him and see where he pastures that horse."

"If you want to keep an eye on him, you may do so," Sanzang said, "but don't play any tricks on him."

"I understand," said Monkey, and as he went out of the room he shook himself, turned into a red dragonfly, flew out of the main gate, and caught up with Pig.

Chapter 23

Instead of letting the horse eat what grass there was, the blockhead chivied and dragged it round to the back door of the house, where he saw the woman and her three daughters admiring some chrysanthemums. When they saw Pig coming, the three girls rushed inside, while their mother remained standing in front of him.

"Where are you going, reverend sir?" she asked. The idiot dropped the horse's bridle, greeted her respectfully, and said, "I'm pasturing the horse, mother."

"That master of yours is too prim and proper," she said. "Wouldn't you rather marry here than go on plodding West as a travelling monk?"

"They're under orders from the Tang Emperor," Pig replied with a grin,

"and are too scared of disobeying him to do a thing like this. When they put the pressure on me in the hall just now I was in a very awkward spot. I hope you don't mind about my long snout and big ears."

"I don't mind," she said, "as long as we can have a man about the house, though my girls might not find you very attractive."

"Tell your girls not to be so particular about a husband," said Pig. "That Tang Priest may be very handsome, but he's completely useless. Although I'm as ugly as they come, I have something to say for myself."

"What would that be?" she asked. His reply was:

"I may be not much to look at,

But I certainly get things done.

Fifteen thousand acres

I can plough without an ox.

Just by using my rake

I plant crops that come up well.

I can summon rain in a drought,

Call up a wind when there's none.

If you find your house too small,

I can add two more stories, or three.

If the ground needs sweeping, I'll sweep it;

If the ditches are blocked, I'll make them run.

I can do all sorts of household jobs.

And perform miscellaneous duties in the home."

"Very well then," she said, "if you can manage the work about the place you'd better go and talk it over with your master. If there are no problems, then you can marry one of the girls."

"There's no need to talk it over with him," Pig said. "He's not my father or mother, and it's entirely up to me whether I do it or not."

"Very well then," she said, "Wait while I tell the girls." With that she went in and shut the door behind her.

Pig still did not let the horse graze but dragged it round towards the front of the house.

Unbeknown to him, Monkey, who knew all about what had happened, flew back, changed back into his own form, and said to the Tang Priest, "Master, Pig is leading the horse back."

"If he hadn't led it, it might have got excited and run away," Sanzang said, at which Monkey burst out laughing and told him all about what had taken place between Pig and the woman. Sanzang did not know whether to believe him or not. A moment later the blockhead led the horse in and tethered it.

"Have you grazed the horse?" Sanzang asked.

"I couldn't find any grass that was good enough," said Pig, "so I couldn't graze it."

"You may not have been able to graze the horse," said Monkey, "but you managed do some horse – trading."

This jibe made the idiot realize that the cat was out of the bag, so he hung his head and did not say a word.

There was a creak as a side door opened and the woman and her three daughters – – Zhenzhen, Aiai and Lianlian – – came in with a pair of lamps glowing red and two portable incense burners from which sweet – smelling smoke curled up as the jade ornaments at their waists tinkled. The three girls greeted the pilgrims, standing in a row in the middle of the room and bowing. They were undoubtedly beauties: All had moth – eyebrows glistening blue,

Pale and spring – like faces.

Seductive beauties who could tumble kingdoms,

Disturbing men's hearts with their quiet charm.

Elegant were their ornaments of golden flowers;

Their embroidered sashes floated above the worldly dust.

Their half–smile was a bursting cherry;

Their breath was perfumed as they walked with slow steps.

Their hair was covered with pearls and jade.

Trembling under countless jeweled ornaments;

Their whole bodies were fragrant,

Covered with delicate flowers of gold.

Why mention the beauty of the woman of Chu,

Or the charms of Xi Zi?

They really were like fairies from the Ninth Heaven,

Or the Lady of the Moon coming out of her palace.

While Sanzang put his hands together and bowed his head the Great Sage pretended not to notice and Friar Sand turned away. But Pig gazed at them with a fixed stare, his mind seething with lewd thoughts as his lust overwhelmed him.

"Thank you, divine angels, for coming to see us," he said, fidgeting, "but could you ask the girls to go, please, mother?" The three girls went out through the door, leaving a pair of gauze–shielded lanterns behind them.

"Will you four reverend gentlemen please decide which of you is to marry one of the girls?" the woman said.

"We've already made up our minds that Mr. Pig is to be your son–in–law," Friar Sand replied.

"Don't pick on me, brother," said Pig, "we should discuss this together."

"No need to," said Monkey. "You've already fixed everything up at the back door and called her 'mother,' so there's nothing to discuss. Our master can represent the groom's family, this lady is the bride's family, I can be best man, and Friar Sand can be the matchmaker. There's no need to bother with the usual exchange of letters, and today is a most auspicious one full of heavenly grace, so bow to the master and go in to be her son—in—law."

"Impossible," said Pig, "impossible. I couldn't do a thing like that."

"Stop trying to cover up, blockhead," said Monkey. "You've already called her 'mother' umpteen times: there's nothing impossible about it at all. Hurry up and fulfil your promise so that we can have some wedding wine, which will be one good thing about it." Seizing Pig with one hand and grabbing the woman with the other he said, "As the bride's mother, you should take your son—in—law inside."

The idiot Pig hesitated, wanting to go in, and the woman said to the servants, "Bring table and chairs and give these three relatives of ours a meatless supper. I'm taking our son—in—law inside." Then she told the cooks to prepare a banquet for their friends and relations the following morning. The servants did as they were told, and the other three pilgrims ate their supper, spread their bedding, and went to sleep in their places.

Pig followed his mother—in—law inside, and as he lost count of the number of rooms he went through, constantly tripping over the thresholds. "Don't go so fast, mother," he said, "and please guide me as I don't know the way."

"These are all granaries, storehouses, and milling rooms," she said. "We haven't reached the kitchens yet."

"What an enormous house," said Pig, as he went round many a corner, tripping and bumping into things, until he reached the inner apartments of the house.

"Your brother said that today was a very auspicious day," the woman said, "which is why I've brought you inside. But as we're doing things in such a rush, I haven't had time to call in a fortune-teller or arrange a proper ceremony with the scattering of fruit. You must just bow eight times, and that will have to do."

"A good idea, mother," said Pig. "You sit in the seat of honour and I'll bow to you a few times--that can be the wedding ceremony and thanking the bride's family rolled into one, which will save trouble."

"Very well then," said the woman with a laugh. "You are a most capable and practical son-in-law. I'll sit here while you bow to me."

In the room glittering with silver candles the blockhead bowed to her, then asked which of the girls would be married to him. "That's the problem," his mother-in-law said. "If I give you the eldest, the second one will be upset; and if I give you the second one, I'm afraid the third one will be; and if I give you the third, the eldest will be--so I haven't decided yet."

"If there's any danger of them quarrelling," said Pig, "then give me all of them, to save the family from being troubled with arguments and squabbles."

"What a suggestion," his mother-in-law exclaimed. "You're certainly not having all my daughters to yourself."

"Don't be silly, mother. What's unusual about three or four wives? Even if there were several more of them, I'd take them on with a smile. When I was young I learned the art of 'protracted warfare,' and I can guarantee to keep every one of them happy."

"No, no," the woman said. "I have a handkerchief here. Tie it round your head to cover your face, and we can let Heaven decide which one you'll marry. I'll tell the girls to walk in front of you while you

stretch your arms out. The one you catch, will be yours." The blockhead obediently tied the handkerchief round his head, and there is a verse to prove it:

The fool, not knowing his own fate,

Was wounded by the sword of sex as he harmed himself in secret
There have always been proper wedding rites,

But today the groom blindfolded himself.

When he had tied the handkerchief on firmly, the idiot said, "Mother, please ask the girls to come out."

"Zhenzhen, Aiai, Lianlian," she called, "come out to see which of you Heaven will marry to my new son – in – law." He heard the tinkling of jade ornaments and smelt rare perfumes as if fairies were there, so he reached out to grab one. He groped about to his left and his right, but without success. There were so many girls running about, and he had no chance of catching one. When he stretched East he only put his arms round Chapter 23

a pillar, and when he stretched West he felt only the wall. As he rushed from one end of the room to the other he felt so dizzy that he lost his balance and kept tripping over. He stumbled into the door when he went forward, and collided with the brick wall when he went back, bumping, crashing and falling over till his snout was swollen and his head blue with bruises. Finally he sat on the floor and said as he gasped for breath,

"Mother, your daughters are so slippery I can't catch a single one of them. Whatever shall I do?"

"They're not slippery," she said, taking off the handkerchief, "they're all too shy to marry you."

"If they won't marry me," Pig said, "then you marry me."

"What a son – in – law!" she said. "He doesn't care whether they're young or old – – he even wants his own mother – in – law. Now each of these clever girls of mine has made a brocade shirt sewn with pearls. I'll tell whichever girl it is whose shirt you put on to marry

you."

"Great, great, great," said Pig. "Bring out all three shirts for me to try on, and if I can get them all on, I'll marry them all." The woman went back inside, and brought out only one shirt, which she handed to Pig. The idiot took off his own black cloth tunic and pulled on the shirt, but before he could tie the belt at the waist he fell to the ground with a thump and found himself tightly bound with many ropes. He was in great pain, and the women had all disappeared.

When Sanzang, Monkey, and Friar Sand woke up, the East was already lightening, and as they opened their eyes and looked around them they saw none of the lofty buildings that had been there. There were no carved and painted beams or rafters either: they had all been sleeping in a grove of pine and cypress. Sanzang called for Monkey in terror, and Friar Sand said, "Elder brother, we're done for, done for——they were demons."

"What do you mean?" asked Monkey, who understood what had happened, with a trace of a smile. "Look where we've been sleeping," said Sanzang. "We're very comfortable here under the pine trees," said Monkey,

"but I wonder where that idiot is being punished."

"Who's being punished?" asked Sanzang.

"The woman and the girls last night were some Bodhisattvas or other appearing to us in disguise," replied Monkey with a grin, "and I suppose they went away in the middle of the night. I'm afraid Pig is being punished." On hearing this, Sanzang put his hands together and worshipped, and then they saw a piece of paper hanging from a cypress tree and fluttering in the breeze. Friar Sand hurried over to fetch it and show it to their master, who saw that there were eight lines of verse on it:

"The Old Woman of Mount Li had no yearning for the world, But the Bodhisattva Guanyin persuaded her to come.

Samantabhadra and Manjusri were both present

Disguised as pretty girls among the trees.

The holy monk were too virtuous to return to lay life,

But the unreligious Pig was worse than worldly.

From now on he must calm his mind and reform— —

If he misbehaves again, the journey will be hard."

As Sanzang, Monkey, and Friar Sand read out these lines they heard loud shouts from the depths of the wood:

"Master, they're tied me up and left me to die. I'll never do it again if you save me."

"Is that Pig shouting, Friar Sand?" asked Sanzang, and Friar Sand said, "Yes."

"Although that blockhead is obstinately stupid in mind and nature," said Sanzang, "he is an honest fellow.

Besides, he is very strong and can carry the luggage— —and we should also remember that the Bodhisattva saved him and told him to come with us. I don't think he'll have the nerve to do it again." Friar Sand then rolled up the bedding and arranged the luggage, while Monkey untied the horse and led it along as he guided the Tang Priest into the wood to investigate. Indeed:

In the pursuit of righteousness you must be careful,

And sweep away desires in your return to the truth.

If you don't know whether the blockhead survived or not, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 24

On the Mountain of Infinite Longevity a Great Immortal Entertains an Old Friend In the Wuzhuang Temple Monkey Steals Manfruit

The three of them went into the wood and saw the idiot tied up under a tree, yelling and howling in unbearable pain. Monkey went over to him and said with a laugh, "What a son—in—law! So late, and you still haven't got up to thank your mother—in—law or come to tell the good news to the master. Why are you still playing around here? Where's your mother—in—law? Where's your wife? You make a fine,

strapped – up, well – beaten son – in – law!"

The blockhead, burning with humiliation at being thus mocked, gritted his teeth to stop himself howling in his agony. Friar Sand was overcome with pity when he saw him, and putting down the luggage he went over and untied him. The idiot kowtowed to him in gratitude. He was suffering terrible remorse. There is a poem to the tune *The Moon in the West River to* prove it:

Sex is a sword that wounds the body;

Whoever lusts for it will suffer.

A pretty girl of sixteen

Is far more dangerous than a yaksha demon.

There is only one Origin,

And there are no extra profits to staff in the sack.

Better store all your capital away,

Guard it well, and don't squander it.

Pig used a pinch of earth to represent burning incense and bowed in worship to Heaven.

"Did you recognize the Bodhisattva?" Monkey asked.

"I was lying here in a faint and my eyes were seeing stars, so I couldn't tell who it was." Monkey handed him the piece of paper, and when he saw the divine message, Pig was more ashamed than ever.

"You're very lucky," said Friar Sand with a laugh, "you've got four Bodhisattvas as your relations now."

"Please don't talk about it," said Pig. "I really don't deserve to be human. I'll never misbehave again in future, and I even if the effort breaks my bones, I'll rub my shoulder and carry our master's luggage to the West."

"That's more like it," said Sanzang.

Monkey then led his master along the main road. After they had been going for a long time, walking and resting, they saw a high mountain blocking their way. "Disciples," said Sanzang as he reined in the horse and stopped giving it the whip, "we must be very careful on that mountain. I'm afraid there may be fiends and demons on it who will attack us."

"With us three followers," said Monkey, "you needn't fear demons." Sanzang, his worries ended, pressed forward. The mountain was certainly a fine one:

The mountain was very high

And craggy was its majesty.

Its roots joined the Kunlun range,

Its summit touched the Milky Way.

White crane came to perch in its locust and cypress trees,

Dark apes hung upside – down from its creepers.

Chapter 24

When the sun shone bright on its forests,

It was enveloped in red haze;

When winds sprang from dark valleys,

Coloured clouds scudded across the sky.

Hidden birds called in the green bamboo,

Pheasants fought among the wild flowers.

Thousand – year peaks,

Five – blessing peaks,

Lotus peaks,

Majestically reflecting a delicate light;

Ten thousand year rocks,

Tiger – tooth rocks,

Three Heavens rocks,

Wreathed in subtle and auspicious vapours.

Luxuriant grass in front of the cliff,

The scent of plum blossom on the ridge.

Dense grew the jungle of thorns,

Pure and pale were the orchids.

Deep in the woods the birds gathered round the phoenix;

In an ancient cave a unicorn was chief of the animals.

A delightful stream in a gully

Twisted and turned as it wandered around;

Endless peaks

Coiled about in layer upon layer.

Then there were the green locust trees,

Mottled bamboo,

And bluish pines,

That had been competing in splendour for a thousand years.

White plum blossom,

Red peach,

And emerald willows

Were brilliant as they vied in beauty during spring.

Dragons called and tigers roared,

Cranes danced and apes howled.

Deer emerged from the flowers,

Pheasants sang to the sun.

This was a land of blessing, an Immortals' mountain,

Just like Penglai or Langyuan.

Flowers opened and withered on the mountain top,

Clouds came and went above the peaks along the ridge.

"Disciples," said Sanzang with delight as he sat on his horse, "I've crossed many mountains on my journey West, and they were all steep and rocky, but none of them could be compared to the extraordinarily beautiful scenery here. If this isn't far from the Thunder Monastery, we had better put ourselves in a solemn and reverent mood to meet the Buddha."

"It's early days yet," said Monkey with a laugh. "That's not an easy place to get to."

"How far are we from Thunder Monastery, elder brother?" asked Friar Sand.

"Thirty–six thousand miles," Monkey replied, "and we haven't covered a tenth of it."

"How many years will it take us to get there?" Pig asked.

"You two younger brothers of mine could manage it in ten days or so, and I could go there fifty times over in a single day and still be back before sunset. But for our master it doesn't bear thinking about."

"Tell me, Monkey! how long will it take?" asked Sanzang.

"If you went from childhood to old age," said Monkey, "and from old age back to childhood again, and you did it a thousand times over, you'd still find it hard to get there. But if you see your true nature, are

determined to be sincere, and always remember to turn your head back to enlightenment, then you will have reached Chapter 24

Vulture Peak."

"Even if this isn't the Thunder Monastery," said Friar Sand, "good people must live amid such fine scenery as this."

"Quite right," said Monkey, "there couldn't be any evil creatures here. This must be the home of holy monks or Immortals. Let's look around here and take our time over it."

This mountain was called the Mountain of Infinite Longevity, and there was a Taoist temple on it called the Wuzhuang Temple. In this temple lived an Immortal whose Taoist name was Zhen Yuan Zi. He was also known as Conjoint Lord of the Age. The temple had a rare treasure, a miraculous tree that had been formed when primeval chaos was first being divided, before the separation of Heaven and Earth. In the four great continents of the world, only the Western Continent of Cattle–gift's Wuzhuang Temple had this treasure that was known as "Grass–returning Cinnabar" or "manfruit." It took three thousand years to blossom, three thousand years to form the fruit, and another three thousand years for the fruit to ripen, so that very nearly ten thousand years had to pass before the fruit could be eaten. Only thirty fruit were formed each ten thousand years, and they were shaped just like a newborn baby, complete with limbs and sense organs. Anyone whose destiny permitted him to smell one would live for three hundred and sixty years, and if you ate one you would live for forty–seven thousand years.

That day the Great Immortal Zhen Yuan had received an invitation from the Original Celestial Jade Pure One inviting him to the Miluo Palace in the Heaven of Supreme Purity to hear a lecture on the Product of Undifferentiated Unity. The Immortals who had studied under this great Immortal were too numerous to count, and he now had forty–eight disciples who had all attained to the full truth of the Way. That day, the Great Immortal took forty–six of them with him to hear the lecture in the upper world, leaving the two youngest, Pure Wind and Bright Moon, to look after the temple. Pure Wind was 1,320 years old, and Bright Moon had just turned 1,200.

The Great Immortal gave his instructions to the two boys: "As I must

obey the summons of the Original Celestial Jade Pure One and go to the Miluo Palace to hear a lecture, you two will have to look after the temple carefully. An old friend of mine will be coming this way before long, and you must entertain him very well indeed. You can pick two manfruits for him as a token of our old friendship."

"Who is this old friend of yours, master?" the boys asked. "Please tell us who he is so that we can entertain him properly."

"He is a priest sent by the Tang Emperor in the East," the Great Immortal replied, "and he is known as Sanzang. He is the monk going to worship the Buddha and ask for the scriptures in the Western Heaven."

"Confucius said, 'Don't have anything to do with people of a different way,'" replied the boys with smiles.

"Ours is the esoteric sect of the Great Monad, so why ever are you friends with that Buddhist monk?"

"You are not aware," the Great Immortal replied, "that he is a reincarnation of the Golden Cicada, the second disciple of the Tathagata Buddha, that ancient sage of the West. I made his acquaintance at an Ullambana assembly where he gave me tea with his own hands. As this disciple of the Buddha paid me such an honour, I regard him as an old friend."

When the two Immortal boys heard this, they accepted their master's orders. Just as he was on the point of setting out, the Great Immortal gave them some more instructions: "There are a limited number of those manfruits. You must only give two, and not one more."

"When the garden was opened we all shared two," said the boys, "and there are twenty–eight now left on the tree. We won't use more than two."

"Although the Tang Priest is an old friend of mine," said the Great Immortal, "you must be on your guard against his ruffian followers, and you mustn't let them know about the manfruit." The Great Immortal then flew up to Heaven with the rest of his disciples.

The Tang Priest and his three followers, meanwhile, were enjoying themselves strolling on the mountain when they noticed some tall buildings rising above a bamboo grove. "What do you think that is?" Sanzang asked Monkey, who replied, "It's either a Taoist temple or a Buddhist one. Let's go over and find out." It did not take them long to reach the gate, and they saw

A cool pine—covered slope,

A tranquil path through the bamboo.

White cranes brought floating clouds,

Monkeys and apes offered fruit.

Before the gate was a wide pool, and the shadows of the trees were long; In the cracks of the rocks grew moss.

Many a purple hall was massed together;

A red aura enveloped the lofty towers.

It certainly was a blessed place,

A cloud cave on Penglai.

In its pure emptiness little happened;

Its stillness gave birth to thoughts of the Way.

Green birds often brought letters from the Queen Mother;

Purple pheasants carried the classics of Lord Lao Zi.

There was a majestic air of the Way and its Power——

It was indeed a divine Immortal's home.

Sanzang dismounted and saw that there was a stone tablet outside the gate on which was inscribed in large letters:

BLESSED LAND OF THE MOUNTAIN OF INFINITE LONGEVITY

"You were right," said Sanzang, "it is a Taoist temple."

"Good people must live in this temple," said Friar Sand, "set as it is in such fresh, light scenery. Let's go in and have a look round. When we go back to the East at the end of our journey, this will be one of the finest sights we'll have seen."

"Well spoken," said Monkey, and they all went in. On the next gate was pasted the couplet:

"Residence of Divine Immortals Who Never Grow Old;

Home of Taoists as Ancient as Heaven."

"This Taoist tries to intimidate people by talking big," said Monkey with a laugh. "When I wrecked the Heavenly Palace five hundred years ago I never saw anything like that over the gate of the Supreme Lord Lao Zi."

"Never mind him," said Pig. "Let's go in. This Taoist may well be quite a decent bloke."

As they went through the second gate they saw two boys come scurrying out. This is what they looked like: Pure bones, lively spirits, pretty faces,

And hair tied in childish tufts.

Their Taoist robes naturally wreathed in mist,

The sleeves of their feather clothes were floating in the wind.

Their jade belts were tied with dragon—head knots,

Their grass sandals lightly fastened with silk.

In their elegance they were unlike common mortals— —

The Taoist boys Pure Wind and Bright Moon.

The two boys bowed and came out to greet them. "We are sorry we did not welcome you properly, venerable master," they said. "Please sit down." Sanzang was delighted, and he accompanied the two boys up to the main hall of the temple, which faced South. There was a patterned lattice window that let through the light on top of the door that the boys pushed open. They asked the Tang Priest to come in, and he saw two huge words executed in many colours hanging on the wall ——Heaven and Earth. There was an incense table of red carved lacquer on which stood a pair of golden censers and a supply of incense.

Sanzang went over to the table and put a pinch of incense in the censers with his left hand while performing triple reverences. Then he turned round to the boys and said, "This temple is a home of Immortals in the Western Continent, so why don't you worship the Three Pure Ones, the Four Emperors, and all the ministers of Heaven? Why do you burn incense to the two words 'Heaven' and 'Earth?'"

"To be frank with you, venerable teacher," the boys replied with smiles, "it's quite right to worship the top word, 'Heaven,' but the bottom one, 'Earth,' gets no incense from us. Our teacher only put them up to ingratiate himself."

"How does he ingratiate himself?" Sanzang asked.

"The Three Pure Ones and the Four Emperors are our teacher's friends," the boys replied, "the Nine Bright Shiners are his juniors, and the Constellations are his underlings."

When Monkey heard this he collapsed with laughter, and Pig asked him, "What are you laughing at?"

"They say that I get up to no good, but these Taoist boys really tell whoppers."

"Where is your teacher?" Sanzang asked them.

"He had an invitation from the Original Celestial Jade Pure One and has gone to the Palace in the Heaven of Supreme Purity to hear a lecture on the Product of Undifferentiated Unity, so he's not at home."

At this Monkey could not help roaring, "Stinking Taoist boys, you don't know who you're talking to. You play your dirty tricks in front of our faces and pretend to be oh—so—innocent. What Heavenly Immortal of the Great Monad lives in the Miluo Palace? Who invited your cow's hoof of a master to a lecture?"

Sanzang was worried that now he had lost his temper the boys would answer back and spark off a disastrous fight, so he said, "Don't quarrel with them, Wukong. We'll be going in a minute, so we obviously need have nothing to do with them. Besides, as the saying goes, 'egrets don't eat egret flesh'. Their master isn't here anyway, so there would be no point in wrecking the place. Go and graze the horse outside the gate. Friar Sand, you look after the luggage, and tell Pig to take some rice from our bundles and use their kitchen to make our meal. When we go we shall give them a few coppers for the firewood. All do as I've told you and leave me here to rest. When we have eaten we shall be on our way again." The three of them went off to do their jobs.

Bright Moon and Pure Wind were meanwhile quietly praising Sanzang to each other: "What a splendid monk.

He is indeed the beloved sage of the West in mortal form, and his true nature is not at all befuddled. The master told us to entertain him and give him some manfruit as a token of their old friendship, and he also warned us to be on our guard against those hooligans of his. They have murderous—looking faces and coarse natures. Thank goodness he sent them away, because if they were still with him, we wouldn't be able to give him the manfruit."

"We don't yet know whether this monk is our master's old friend or not," said Pure Wind. "We'd better ask him to make sure." The two of them then went over to Sanzang and said, "May we ask you, venerable master, Chapter 24

whether you are the Sanzang of the Great Tang who is going to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures?"

"Yes, I am," said Sanzang, returning their bows. "How did you know who I was?"

"Our master told us before he went," they replied, "to go out to meet you long before you got here, but as you came faster than we expected we failed to do so. Please sit down, teacher, while we fetch you some tea."

"I am honoured," said Sanzang. Bright Moon hurried out and came back with a cup of fragrant tea for him.

When Sanzang had drunk the tea, Pure Wind said to Bright Moon, "We must do as our teacher told us and fetch the fruit."

The two boys left Sanzang and went to their room, where one of them picked up a golden rod and the other a red dish, on which he put many a silk handkerchief as cushioning. They went into the manfruit orchard, where Pure Wind climbed the tree and tapped the fruit with the golden rod while Bright Moon waited below to catch them in the dish.

They only took a few moments to knock down and catch a couple, which they took to the front hall to offer to Sanzang with the words, "This temple of ours is on a remote and desolate mountain, master Sanzang, and there is no local delicacy we can offer you except these two pieces of fruit. We hope they will quench your thirst."

At the sight of the manfruit the monk recoiled some three feet, shaking with horror. "Goodness me!" he exclaimed. "How could you be so reduced to starvation in this year of plenty as to eat human flesh? And how could I possibly quench my thirst with a newborn baby?"

"This monk has developed eyes of flesh and a mortal body in the battlefield of mouths and tongues and the sea of disputation," thought Pure Wind, "and he can't recognize the treasures of this home of Immortals."

"Venerable master," said Bright Moon, "this is what is called 'manfruit,' and there is no reason why you should not eat one."

"Nonsense, nonsense," said Sanzang. "They were conceived by their fathers and mothers and had to go through no end of suffering before they were born. How can you treat them as fruit when they haven't been alive for three days yet?"

"They really and truly grew on a tree," said Pure Wind.

"Stuff and rubbish," Sanzang replied. "Babies don't grow on trees. Take them away, you inhuman beasts."

As he refused absolutely to eat them, the two boys had to take the dish away and go back to their room. This fruit was rather difficult to handle, and did not keep for long without becoming hard and inedible, so the boys sat on their beds and ate one each.

Oh dear! What a thing to happen! There was only a wall separating their room from the kitchen, where their whispering could be clearly

heard. Pig was in there cooking the rice when he heard them talk as they fetched the golden rod and the red dish. Later he heard them saying that the Tang Priest had not recognized the manfruit, which was why they took them back to their room to eat.

"I'd love to try one, but I don't know how," thought Pig, unable to prevent his mouth from watering. Too stupid to do anything about it himself, he had to wait until he could talk it over with Brother Monkey. He had Chapter 24

now lost all interest in stoking the stove as he stood in front of it, constantly poking his head outside the kitchen to look for Monkey. Before long Monkey appeared leading the horse, which he tethered to a locust tree. As he came round to the back, the blockhead waved frantically to him and said, "Come here, come here."

Monkey turned round, came to the kitchen door, and said, "What are you yelling for, idiot? Not enough food for you? Let the old monk eat his fill, then we two can go to the next big house that lies ahead and beg for some more."

"Come in," said Pig, "it's not that. Do you know that there's a treasure in this temple?"

"What treasure?" Monkey asked.

"I can't describe it because you've never seen it," said Pig, "and if I gave it to you, you wouldn't know what it was."

"Don't try to make a fool of me, idiot," said Monkey. "When I studied the Way of Immortality five hundred years ago I traveled on my cloud to the comers of the ocean and the edge of the sky. I've seen everything."

"Have you seen manfruit then?" Pig asked.

"No, I haven't," said Monkey with astonishment. "But I've heard that manfruit is Grass—returning Cinnabar, and that anyone who eats it lives to a great old age. Where can we get some?"

"Here," said Pig. "Those boys gave two to our master, but that old monk didn't know what they were and thought they were newborn

babies. He wouldn't eat them. Those boys are disgraceful— —instead of giving them to us as they should have done they sneaked off into their room and had one each, gobble, gobble, gobble— —I was drooling. I wish I knew how I could try one. Surely you've got some dodge for getting into the orchard and pinching a few for us to taste. You have, haven't you?"

"Easy," said Monkey. "I'll go in and pick some."

As he rushed out Pig grabbed him and said, "I heard them saying in their room that they needed a golden rod to knock them down with. You must do this very carefully— —nobody must know about it."

"I know, I know," replied Monkey.

The Great Sage made himself invisible and slipped into the boys' room, only to find that after eating the fruit they had gone to the front hall, where they were talking to Sanzang. Monkey looked all around the room for the golden rod until he saw a two—foot length of gold hanging from the window lattice. It was about as thick as a finger. At the bottom was a lump like a bulb of garlic, and at the top was a hole through which was fastened a green silk tassel. "So this must be what they call the golden rod," he thought as he took it down. He left the room and pushed open a pair of gates at the back. Goodness! He saw a garden With red, jeweled balconies

And a twisting artificial hill.

Rare flowers try to outshine the sun,

Chapter 24

The bamboo attempts to be bluer than the sky.

Outside the Floating Cup Pavilion

A curve of willows hangs like mist;

Before the Platform to Admire the Moon

Clumps of lofty pines make splashes of indigo.

Bright, bright red,

The pomegranate thicket;

Deep, deep green,

The cushions of grass.

Richly blue

Were the jade – coloured orchids;

Rushing and powerful

The water in the stream.

Crimson cassia blazed beside golden wells and wutong trees.

Brocade – rich locust trees flanked red balconies and steps.

There was peach blossom in pink and white,

Yellow and fragrant chrysanthemums that have seen nine autumns.

Trellises of raspberries

Flourish by the peony pavilion;

Banks of hibiscus

Lead to beds of tree – peonies.

There is no end of noble bamboos that have held out against frost.

Or lordly pines that defy the snows.

Then there are nests of cranes and houses for deer,

Square ponds and round pools,

Spring water like fragments of jade,

Golden heaps of flowers.

The North wind bursts the white plum blossom open.

When spring comes, it touches the crab—apple with red.

It can be rightly called the most splendid view on Earth,

The finest garden in the West.

Before Monkey had time to take all of this in he saw another gate. When he pushed it open he saw Vegetables for each of the four seasons——

Spinach, celery, beetroot, ginger, and kelp,

Bamboo shoots, sweet potato, melons, oblong gourd and wild rice stem, Onions, garlic, coriander, scallion and shallots,

Lettuce, artemisia, and bitter alisma,

Gourds and aubergines that must be planted,

Rutabaga, turnips, docks,

Red amaranth, green cabbage, and purple mustard—plant.

"So they're Taoists who grow their own food," thought Monkey, smiling to himself. When he had crossed the vegetable garden he saw yet another gate, and when he opened it there was a huge tree in front of him with fragrant branches and shade—giving green leaves shaped rather like those of plantains. The tree was about a thousand feet high, and its trunk was some seventy or eighty feet round. Monkey leant against it and looked up, and on a branch that was pointing South he saw a manfruit, which really did look just like a newborn child. The stem came from its bottom, and as it hung from the branch its hands and feet waved wildly around and it shook its head. Monkey was thoroughly delighted, and he thought in admiration, "What a splendid thing——a real rarity, a real rarity." And with that thought he went shooting up the tree.

Now there is nothing that monkeys are better at than climbing trees to steal fruit, and one blow from the golden rod sent the manfruit tumbling down. He jumped down to fetch it, but it was nowhere to be seen. He searched the grass all around, but could find not a trace of it. "That's odd," he thought, "very odd indeed. It must be able to use its feet——but even then it won't be able to get past the wall. No, I've got it. The local deity of this garden has hidden it away to stop me

stealing it."

He made some finger magic and uttered the sacred sound " *Om*," which forced the garden deity to come forward, bow and say, "You summoned me, Great Sage. What are your orders?"

"Surely you know," Monkey said, "that I am the most famous criminal on earth. When I stole the sacred peaches, the imperial wine, and the elixir of immortality some years ago, nobody dared to try and take a cut.

How comes it that when I take some fruit today you pinch my very first one? This fruit grows on a tree, and the birds of the air must have their share of it, so what harm will be done if I eat one? Why did you snatch it the moment it fell down?"

"Great Sage," the deity replied, "don't be angry with me. These treasures belong to the Immortals of the Earth, and I am a ghost Immortal, so I would never dare take one. I've never even had the good fortune to smell one."

"If you didn't take it, why did it disappear the moment I knocked it down from the tree?" Monkey asked.

"You may know that these treasures give eternal life, Great Sage," the deity replied, "but you don't know about their origin."

"Where do they come from, then?" Monkey asked.

"These treasures," the deity replied, "take three thousand years to blossom, another three thousand to form, and three thousand more to ripen. In almost ten thousand years only thirty grow. Anyone lucky enough to smell one will live for three hundred and sixty years, and if you eat one you will live to be forty—seven thousand. These fruit fear only the Five Elements."

"What do you mean, 'fear only the Five Elements?'" Monkey asked.

"If they meet metal," the deity said, "they fall; if they meet wood they rot; if they meet water they dissolve; if they meet fire they are burnt;

and if they meet earth they go into it. If you tap them you have to use a golden rod, otherwise they won't drop; and when you knock them down you must catch them in a bowl padded with silk handkerchiefs. If they come in contact with wooden utensils they rot, and even if you eat one it won't make you live any longer. When you eat them you must do so off porcelain, and they should be cooked in clear water. If they come in contact with fire they become charred and useless, and they go into any earth they touch. When you knocked one to the ground just now it went straight in, and as the earth here will now live for forty–seven thousand years you wouldn't be able to make any impression on it even with a steel drill: it's much harder than wrought iron. But if a man eats one he wins long life. Try hitting the ground if you don't believe me." Monkey raised his gold–ringed cudgel and brought it down on the ground. There was a loud noise as the cudgel sprang back. The ground was unmarked.

"So you're right," said Monkey, "you're right. This cudgel of mine can smash rocks to powder and even leave its mark on wrought iron, but this time it did no damage at all. This means that I was wrong to blame you.

You may go back now." At this the local deity went back to his shrine.

The Great Sage now had a plan. He climbed the tree and then held the rod in one hand while he undid the lapel of his cloth tunic and made it into a kind of pouch. He pushed the leaves and branches aside and knocked down three manfruits, which he caught in his tunic. He jumped out of the tree and went straight to the kitchen, where a smiling Pig asked him if he had got any. "This is the stuff, isn't it?" said Monkey. "I was able to get some. We mustn't leave Friar Sand in the dark, so give him a shout."

"Come here, Friar Sand," Pig called, waving his hand. Friar Sand put the luggage down, hurried into the kitchen, and asked, "Why did you call me?"

"Do you know what these are?" Monkey asked, opening his tunic. "Manfruits," said Friar Sand as soon as he saw them. "Good," said Monkey, "you know what they are. Where have you eaten them?"

"I've never eaten them," Friar Sand replied, "but when I was the Curtain—lifting General in the old days I used to escort the imperial carriage to the Peach Banquets, and I saw some that Immortals from over the seas brought as birthday presents for the Queen Mother. I've certainly seen them, but I've never tasted one. Please give me a bit to try."

"No need to ask," said Monkey. "We're having one each."

So each of them had one manfruit to eat. Pig had both an enormous appetite and an enormous mouth, and had, moreover, been suffering pangs of hunger ever since hearing the Taoist boys eating. So the moment he saw the fruit he grabbed one, opened his mouth, and gulped it down whole; then he put on an innocent expression and shamelessly asked the other two what they were eating. "Manfruit," Friar Sand replied.

"What does it taste like?" Pig asked.

"Ignore him, Friar Sand," said Monkey. "He's already eaten his, and he's no business to ask you."

"Brother," said Pig, "I ate mine too fast. I didn't nibble it delicately and taste the flavour like you two. I don't even know if it had a stone or not as I gulped it straight down. You should finish what you've started: you've whetted my appetite, so you ought to get me another to eat slowly."

"You're never satisfied," Monkey replied. "These things aren't like rice or flour— —you can't go stuffing yourself full of them. Only thirty grow in every ten thousand years, so we can think ourselves very lucky indeed to have a whole one each. Come off it, Pig, you've had enough." He got up, slipped into the Taoist boys' room with the golden rod, and put it back without letting himself be seen through the window. He paid no more attention to Pig, who went on grumbling.

Before long the Taoist boys were back in their room, and they heard Pig moaning, "I didn't enjoy my manfruit; I wish I could have another." Pure Wind's suspicion were aroused, and he said to Bright Moon, "Did you hear that long-snouted monk saying he wished he could have another manfruit? Our master told us when he went that we were to be careful of those gangsters and not let them steal our treasures."

"This is terrible, terrible," said Bright Moon. "What's the golden rod doing on the floor? We'd better go into the garden and take a look

around." The two of them hurried out and found the garden gates open.

"We shut this gate," said Pure Wind, "so why is it open?" They rushed round the flower garden, found the vegetable garden gate open too, and tore into the manfruit garden. They leant on the tree and looked up into it to count the fruit, but however often they added the number up, it always came to twenty—two.

"Can you do arithmetic?" Bright Moon asked, and Pure Wind replied, "Yes. Tell me the figures."

"There were originally thirty manfruits," said Bright Moon. "When our master opened the garden two were divided up and eaten, which left twenty—eight. Just now we knocked two down to give the Tang Priest, which left twenty—six. But there are only twenty—two now, which means that we're four short. It goes without saying that those bad men must have stolen them. Let's go and tell that Tang Priest what we think of him."

The two of them went from the garden to the front hall, where they pointed at Sanzang and poured the most filthy and stinking abuse on him, calling him "baldy" this and "baldy" that. It was more than Sanzang could stand, so he said, "What are you making all this fuss about, Immortal boys? Please stop. I wouldn't mind you being a bit offhand with me, but you can't talk in this outrageous way."

"Are you deaf?" Pure Wind asked. "We're not talking a foreign language, and you can understand us perfectly well. You've stolen our manfruit, and you've no right to forbid us to mention it."

"What does manfruit look like?" Sanzang asked.

"It's what we offered you just now and you said looked like babies."

"Amitabha Buddha!" Sanzang exclaimed. "I shook with terror at the very sight of them— —I couldn't possibly steal one. Even if I were being racked by the most terrible greed, I could never commit the crime of eating one of those. What do you mean by making so unjust an accusation?"

"Although you didn't eat any," said Pure Wind, "those underlings of yours stole and ate some."

"Even if they did, you shouldn't shout like that. Wait till I've questioned them. If they stole some, I'll see that they make it up to you."

"Make it up?" said Bright Moon. "They are things that money can't buy."

"Well then," said Sanzang, "if money won't buy them, 'decent behavior is worth a thousand pieces of gold,' as the saying goes. I'll make them apologize to you, and that will be that. Besides, we still don't know whether they did it."

"Of course they did," retorted Bright Moon. "They're still quarrelling in there because they were divided unfairly."

"Come here, disciples," called Sanzang.

"We've had it," said Friar Sand when he heard Sanzang calling. "The game's up. Our master is calling us and the young Taoists are swearing and cursing. The cat must be out of the bag."

"How disgraceful," said Monkey, "all that fuss about some food. But if we confess it, they'll say it was stealing food; the best thing is not to admit it at all."

"Quite right, quite right, we'll cover it up," said Pig, and three of them went from the kitchen to the hall.

If you don't know how they denied it, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 25

The Immortal Zhen Yuan Captures the Pilgrim Priest

Monkey Makes Havoc in the Wuzhuang Temple

"The meal is cooked," the three disciples said as they entered the hall, "what did you call us for?"

"I'm not asking about the meal, disciples," said Sanzang. "This temple has things called manfruit or something that look like babies. Which of you stole and ate some?"

"I don't know anything about it, honest I don't— —I never saw any," said Pig.

Chapter 25

357

Journey to the West

"That grinning one did it," said Pure Wind, "that grinning one."

"I've had a smile on my face all my life," shouted Monkey. "Are you going to stop me smiling just because you can't find some fruit or other?"

"Don't lose your temper, disciple," said Sanzang. "As men of religion we should control our tongues and not eat food that befuddles our minds. If you ate their fruit you should apologize to them, instead of trying to brazen it out like this."

Seeing that his master was talking sense, Brother Monkey began to tell the truth. "I didn't start it, master," he said. "Pig heard the Taoist boys eating something called manfruit next door to him and wanted to try one himself. He made me go and get three so that we three disciples could have one each. But now they've been eaten, there's no point in waiting around here."

"How can these priests deny that they are criminals when they've stolen four of our manfruits?" said Bright Moon.

"Amitabha Buddha," exclaimed Pig, "if he pinched four of them why did he only share out three? He must have done the dirty on us." He continued to shout wildly in this vein.

Now that they knew that the fruit really had been stolen, the two boys started to abuse them even more foully.

The Great Sage ground his teeth of steel in his fury, glaring with his fiery eyes and tightening his grip on his iron cudgel. "Damn those Taoist boys," he thought when he could restrain himself no longer. "If they'd hit us we could have taken it, but now they're insulting us to our faces like this, I'll finish their tree off, then none of them can have any more fruit."

Splendid Monkey. He pulled a hair out from the back of his head, breathed a magic breath on it, said

"Change," and turned it into an imitation Monkey who stayed with the Tang Priest, Pig and Friar Sand to endure the cursing and swearing of the Taoist boys, while the real Monkey used his divine powers to leap out of the hall by cloud. He went straight to the garden and struck the manfruit tree with his gold – banded cudgel.

Then he used his supernatural strength that could move mountains to push the tree over with a single shove.

The leaves fell, the branches splayed out, and the roots came out of the ground. The Taoists would have no more of their "Grass – returning Cinnabar." After pushing the tree over Monkey searched through the branches for manfruit, but he could not find a single one. These treasures dropped at the touch of metal, and as Monkey's cudgel was ringed with gold, while being made of iron, another of the five metals, one tap from it brought them all tumbling down, and when they hit the ground they went straight in, leaving none on the tree.

"Great, great, great," he said, "that'll make them all cool down." He put the iron cudgel away, went back to the front of the temple, shook the magic hair, and put it back on his head. The others did not see what was happening as they had eyes of mortal flesh.

A long time later, when the two Taoist boys felt that they had railed at them for long enough, Pure Wind said to Bright Moon, "These monks will take anything we say. We've sworn at them as if we were swearing at chickens, but they haven't admitted anything. I don't think they can have stolen any, after all. The tree is so tall and the foliage is so dense that we may well have miscounted, and if we have, we shouldn't be cursing them so wildly. Let's go and check the number again." Bright Moon agreed, and the pair of them went back to the garden. When they saw that the tree was down with its branches bent out, the leaves fallen, and the fruit gone, they were horror – struck. Pure Wind's knees turned soft and he collapsed, while Bright Moon trembled and shook. Both of them passed out, and there is a verse to describe them: Chapter 25

When Sanzang came to the Mountain of Infinite Longevity,

Monkey finished the Grass – returning Cinnabar.

The branches were splayed out, the leaves fallen, and the tree down.

Bright Moon and Pure Wind's hearts both turned to ice.

The two of them lay in the dirt mumbling deliriously and saying, "What are we to do, what are we to do? The elixir of our Wuzhuang Temple has been destroyed and our community of Immortals is finished. Whatever are we going to say to the master when he comes back?"

"Stop moaning, brother," said Bright Moon. "We must tidy ourselves up and not let those monks know anything's wrong. That hairy–faced sod who looks like a thunder god must have done it. He must have used magic to destroy our treasure. But it's useless to argue with him as he'll deny everything, and if we start a quarrel with him and fighting breaks out, we two haven't a chance against the four of them. We'll have to fool them and say that no fruit is missing. We'll pretend we counted wrong before, and apologize to them. Their rice is cooked, and we can give them a few side dishes to eat with it. The moment they've each got a bowl of food you and I will stand on either side of the door, slam it shut, and lock it. After that we can lock all the gates, then they won't be able to get away. When our master comes back he can decide what to do with them.

That old monk is a friend of his, so our master may want to forgive him as a favour. And if he doesn't feel forgiving, we've got the criminals under arrest and may possibly not get into trouble ourselves."

"Absolutely right," said Pure Wind.

The two of them pulled themselves together, forced themselves to look happy, and went back to the front hall.

"Master," they said, bowing low to Sanzang, "we were extremely rude to you just now. Please forgive us."

"What do you mean?" asked Sanzang.

"The fruit is all there," they replied. "We couldn't see it all before as the tree is so tall and the foliage so thick but when we checked just now the number was right."

"You're too young to know what you're doing," said Pig, taking the chance to put the boot in. "Why did you swear and curse at us, and try to frame us up? You bastards."

Monkey, who understood what the boys were up to, said nothing and

thought, "Lies, lies. The fruit is all finished. Why ever are they saying this? Can it be that they know how to bring the tree back to life?"

"Very well then," Sanzang was saying meanwhile, "bring our rice in and we'll be off after eating it."

Pig went off to fill their bowls and Friar Sand arranged a table and chairs. The two boys hurried out and fetched some side dishes — — salted squash, salted eggplant, turnips in wine — lees, pickle bean, salted lettuce, and mustard plant, some seven or eight plates in all. These they gave to the pilgrims to eat with their rice, and then they waited on them with a pot of good tea and two cups. As soon as the four pilgrims had their ricebowls in their hands, the boys, who were on either side of the doorway, slammed the doors to and locked them with a double — sprung bronze lock.

"You shouldn't do that, boys," said Pig with a smile. "Even if the people round here are a bit rough there's no need to shut the doors while we eat."

"Yes, yes," said Bright Moon, "we'll open them after lunch." Pure Wind, however, was abusive.

"I'll get you, you greedy, bald — headed food — thief," he said. "You ate our immortal fruit and deserve to be punished for the crime of stealing food from fields and gardens. On top of that you've pushed our tree over and ruined our temple's source of immortality. How dare you argue with us? Your only chance of reaching the Western Heaven and seeing the Buddha is to be reborn and be rocked in the cradle again." When Sanzang heard this he dropped his ricebowl, feeling as if a boulder was weighing down his heart. The two boys went and locked the main and the inner gates of the temple, then came back to the main hall to abuse them with filthy language and call them criminals and bandits till evening, when they went off to eat. The two of them returned to their rooms after supper.

"You're always causing trouble, you ape," grumbled Sanzang at Monkey. "You stole their fruit, so you should have let them lose their temper and swear at you, then that would have been the end of it. Why on earth did you push their tree over? If they took this to court

you wouldn't be able to get off even if your own father were on the bench."

"Don't make such a row, master," said Monkey. "Those boys have gone to bed, and when they're asleep we can do a midnight flit."

"But all the gates have been locked," said Friar Sand, "and they've been shut very firmly, so how can we possibly get away?"

"Don't let it bother you," said Monkey, "I have a way."

"We weren't worried that you wouldn't have a way," said Pig. "You can turn yourself into an insect and fly out through the holes in the window lattice. But you'll be leaving poor old us, who can't turn ourselves into something else, to stay here and carry the can for you."

"If he does a trick like that and doesn't take us with him I'll recite that old sutra – –he won't get away scot–free then."

Pig was both pleased and worried to hear this. "What do you mean, master?" he said. "I know that the Buddha's teachings include a *Lankavatara Sutra,* a *lotus Sutra,* a *Peacock Sutra,* an *Avalokit esvara Sutra,* and a *Diamond Sutra,* but I never heard of any *Old Sutra."*

"What you don't know, brother," said Monkey, "is that the Bodhisattva Guanyin gave this band I have round my head to our master. He tricked me into wearing it, and now it's virtually rooted there and I can't take it off.

The spell or sutra for tightening this band is what he meant by the 'old surra'. If he says it, my head aches. It's a way he has of making me suffer. Please don't recite it, master. I won't abandon you. I guarantee that we'll all get out.

It was now dark, and the moon had risen in the East. "It's quiet now," said Monkey, "and the moon is bright.

This is the time to go."

"Stop fooling about, brother," said Pig. "The gates are all locked, so where can we possibly go?"

"Watch this trick," said Monkey, and gripping his cudgel in his hand he pointed at the doors and applied unlocking magic to them. There was a clanking sound, and the locks fell from all the doors and gates, which

he pushed them open.

"Not half clever," said Pig. "A locksmith with his skeleton keys couldn't have done it anything like as fast."

"Nothing difficult about opening these doors," said Monkey. "I can open the Southern Gates of Heaven just by pointing at them." Then he asked his master to go out and mount the horse. Pig shouldered the luggage, Friar Sand led the horse, and they headed West. "You carry on," Monkey said, "while I go back to make sure that those two boys will stay asleep for a month."

"Mind you don't kill them, disciple," said Sanzang, "or you'll be on a charge of murder in the pursuit of theft as well."

"I'm aware of that," replied Monkey and went back into the temple. Standing outside the door of the room where the boys were sleeping, he took a couple of sleep insects from his belt. These were what he had used when he fooled the Heavenly King Virudhaka at the Eastern Gate of Heaven, and now he threw them in through a gap in the window lattice. They landed straight on the boys' faces, and made them fall into a deeper sleep from which they would not wake up for a long time. Then he streaked back by cloud and caught up with Sanzang. They headed West along the main road.

That night the horse never stopped, and they kept on till dawn. "You'll be the death of me, you ape," said Sanzang. "Because of your greed I've had to stay awake all night."

"Stop grumbling," said Monkey. "Now that it's light you can rest in the forest beside the road and build your strength up before we move on." Sanzang obediently dismounted and sat down on the roots of a pine tree, using it as a makeshift meditation platform. Friar Sand put down the luggage and took a nap, while Pig pillowed his head on a rock and went to sleep. Monkey, the Great Sage, had his own ideas and amused himself leaping from tree to tree.

After the lecture in the palace of the Original Celestial Jade Pure One the Great Immortal Zhen Yuan led his junior Immortals down from the Tushita Heaven through the jade sky on auspicious clouds, and in a moment they were back at the gates of the Wuzhuang Temple. The gates, he saw, were wide open, and the ground was clean.

"So Pure Wind and Bright Moon aren't so useless after all," he said. "Usually they're still in bed when the sun is high in the sky. But now, with us away, they got up early, opened the gates, and swept the grounds." All the junior Immortals were delighted. Yet when they went into the hall of worship there was no incense burning and nobody to be seen.

Where were Bright Moon and Pure Wind, they wondered. "They probably thought that with us not here they could steal some stuff and clear out."

"What an outrageous idea," said the Great Immortal. "As if men cultivating immortality could do anything so evil! I think they must have forgotten to shut the gates before they went to sleep last night and not have woken up yet." When the Immortals went to look in their room they found the doors closed and heard the boys snoring. They hammered on the doors and shouted for all they were worth, but the boys did not wake up.

They forced the doors open and pulled the boys from their beds: the boys still did not wake up. "Fine Immortal boys you are," said the Great Immortal with a smile. "When you become an Immortal your divine spirit should be so full that you do not want to sleep. Why are they so tired? They must have been bewitched.

Fetch some water at once." A boy hastily handed him half a bowl of water. He intoned a spell, took a mouthful of the water, and spurted it on their faces. This broke the enchantment. The two of them woke up, opened their eyes, rubbed their faces, looked around them, and saw the Great Immortal as well as all their Chapter 25

Immortal brothers. Pure Wind bowed and Bright Moon kowtowed in their confusion, saying, "Master, that old friend of yours, the priest from the East...a gang of bandits... murderous, murderous...."

"Don't be afraid," said the Great Immortal with a smile. "Calm down and tell us all about it."

"Master," said Pure Wind, "the Tang Priest from the East did come. It was quite soon after you had left. There were four monks and a horse ——five of them altogether. We did as you had ordered us and picked two manfruits to offer him, but the venerable gentleman was too

vulgar and stupid to know what our treasures were. He said that they were newborn babies and refused to eat any, so we ate one each. Little did we imagine that one of his three disciples called Brother Sun Wukong, or Monkey, would steal four manfruits for them to eat. We spoke to him very reasonably, but he denied it and secretly used his magic. It's terrible...." At this point the two boys could no longer hold back the tears that now streamed down their cheeks. "Did the monk strike you?" asked the immortals. "No," said Bright Moon, "he only felled our manfruit tree."

The Great Immortal did not lose his temper when he heard their story, "Don't cry," he said, "don't cry. What you don't realize is that Monkey is an Immortal of the Supreme Monad, and that he played tremendous havoc in the Heavenly Palace. He has vast magic powers. But he has knocked our tree over. Could you recognize those monks?"

"I could recognize all of them," replied Pure Wind.

"In that case come with me," said the Great Immortal. "The rest of you are to prepare the instruments of torture and be ready to flog them when we come back."

The other Immortals did as they were told while the Great Immortal, Bright Moon and Pure Wind pursued Sanzang on a beam of auspicious light. It took them but an instant to cover three hundred miles. The Great Immortal stood on the edge of the clouds and gazed to the West, but he did not see Sanzang; then he turned round to look East and saw that he had left Sanzang over two hundred and fifty miles behind. Even riding all night that venerable gentleman had covered only forty miles, which was why the Great Immortal's cloud had overshot him by a great distance.

"Master," said one of the Immortal boys, "there's the Tang Priest, sitting under a tree by the side of the road."

"Yes, I'd seen him myself," the Great Immortal replied. "You two go back and get some ropes ready, and I'll catch him myself." Pure Wind and Bright Moon went back.

The Great Immortal landed his cloud, shook himself, and turned into and itinerant Taoist. Do you know what he looked like?

He wore a patchwork gown,

Tied with Lu Dongbin sash,

Waving a fly – whisk in his hand

He tapped a musical drum.

The grass sandals on his feet had three ears,

Chapter 25

362

Journey to the West

His head was wrapped in a sun turban.

As the wind filled his sleeves

He sang *The Moon Is High.*

"Greetings, venerable sir," he called, raising his hands. "Oh, I'm sorry I didn't notice you before," replied Sanzang hastily.

"Where are you from?" the Great Immortal asked. "And why are you in meditation during your journey?"

"I have been sent by the Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven," Sanzang said, "and I'm taking a rest along the way."

"You must have crossed my desolate mountain if you have come from the East."

"May I ask, Immortal sir, which mountain is yours?"

"My humble abode is the Wuzhuang Temple on the Mountain of Infinite Longevity."

"We didn't come that way," said Monkey, who realized what was happening. "We've only just started out."

The Great Immortal pointed at him and laughed. "I'll show you, you damned ape. Who do you think you're fooling? I know that you knocked our manfruit tree down and came here during the night. You had better confess: you won't get away with concealing anything. Stay where you are, and give me back that tree at once." Monkey flared up at this, and with no further discussion he struck at the Great Immortal's head with his cudgel. The Great Immortal twisted away from the blow and went straight up into the sky on a beam of light,

closely pursued by Monkey on a cloud. In mid – air the Great Immortal reverted to his true appearance, and this is what he looked like:

A golden crown on his head,

A No – worries cloak of crane's down on his body.

A pair of turned – up sandals on his feet,

And round his waist a belt of silk.

His body was like a child's,

His face was that of a beautiful woman.

A wispy beard floated down from his chin,

And the hair on his temples was crow – black.

He met Monkey unarmed

With only a jade – handled whisk in his hands.

Monkey struck wildly at him with his club, only to be parried to left and right by the Great Immortal's whisk.

After two or three rounds the Great Immortal did a "Wrapping Heaven and Earth in His Sleeve" trick, waving his sleeve gently in the breeze as he stood amid the clouds, then sweeping it across the ground and gathering up the four pilgrims and their horse in it.

"Hell," said Pig, "We're all caught in a bag."

"It isn't a bag, you idiot," said Monkey, "he's caught us all in his sleeve."

"It doesn't matter, anyhow," said Pig. "I can make a hole in it with a single blow of my rake that we can all get through. Then we'll be able to drop out when he relaxes his grip on us." But however desperately he struck at the fabric he could make no impression on it: although it

was soft when held in the hand it was harder than iron when hit.

The Great Immortal turned his cloud round, went straight back to the Wuzhuang Temple, landed, sat down, and told his disciples to fetch rope. Then, with all the junior Immortals in attendance, he took the Tang Priest out of his sleeve as if he were a puppet and had him tied to one of the pillars of the main hall. After that he took the other three out and tied each of them to a pillar. The horse was taken out, tethered, and fed in the courtyard, and their luggage he threw under the covered walk.

"Disciples," he said, "these priests are men of religion, so we cannot use swords, spears or axes on them.

You'd better fetch a leather whip and give them a flogging for me——that will make me feel better about the manfruit." The disciples immediately produced a whip——not an oxhide, sheepskin, deerskin or calfskin whip, but a seven-starred dragon-skin one——and were told to soak it in water. A brawny young Immortal was told to take a firm grip on it. "Master," he said, "which of them stall I flog first?"

"Sanzang is guilty of gross disrespect," the Great Immortal replied, "flog him first."

"That old priest of ours couldn't stand a flogging," thought Monkey when he heard this, "and if he died under the lash the fault would be mine." Finding the thought of this unbearable, he spoke up and said, "You're wrong, sir. I stole the fruit, I ate the fruit, and I pushed the tree over. Why flog him first when you ought to be flogging me?"

"That damn monkey has a point," said the Great Immortal with a smile, "so you'd better flog him first."

"How many strokes?" the junior Immortal asked.

"Give him thirty," the Great Immortal replied, "to match the number of fruits." The junior Immortal whirled the lash and started to bring it down. Monkey, frightened that the Immortal would have great magical powers, opened his eyes wide and looked carefully to see where he was going to be hit, and it turned out to be on his legs. He twisted at the waist, shouted "Change!" turned them into a pair of wrought-iron legs, and watched the blows fall. The junior Immortal gave him thirty lashes, one after the other, until it was almost noon.

"Sanzang must be flogged too," the Great Immortal commanded, "for training his wicked disciple so slackly and letting him run wild."

The junior Immortal whirled the lash again and was going to strike Sanzang when Monkey said, "Sir, you're making another mistake. When I stole the fruit, my master knew nothing about it— —he was talking to those two boys of yours in the main hall of the temple. This plot was hatched by us three disciples. Anyhow, even if he were guilty of slackness in training me, I'm his disciple and should take the flogging for him. Flog me again."

"That damn monkey may be cunning and vicious, but he does have some sense of his obligations to his master. Very well then, flog him again." The junior Immortal gave him another thirty strokes. Monkey looked down and watched his legs being flogged till they shone like mirrors but still he felt no pain.

It was now drawing towards evening, and the Great Immortal said, "Put the lash to soak. We can continue that flogging tomorrow." The junior Immortal took the lash away to be soaked while everyone retired to their quarters, and after supper they all went to bed.

"It was because you three got me into this trouble that I was brought here to be punished," moaned the venerable Sanzang to his three disciples as tears streamed down from his eyes. "Is that how you ought to treat me?"

"Don't grumble," Monkey replied. "I was the one to be flogged first, and you haven't felt the lash, so what have you got to groan about?"

"I may not have been flogged," Sanzang replied, "but it's agony being tied up like this."

"We're tied up too to keep you company," said Friar Sand. "Will you all stop shouting?" said Monkey, "then we can be on our way again when we've taken a rest."

"You're showing off again, elder brother," said Pig. "They've tied us up with hempen ropes and spurted water on them, so we're tightly bound. This isn't like the time we were shut in the hall of the temple and you unlocked the doors to let us out."

"I'm not boasting," said Monkey. "I don't give a damn about their three

hempen ropes sprayed with water.

Even if they were coconut cables as thick as a ricebowl they would only be an autumn breeze." Apart from him speaking, all was now silence. Splendid Monkey made himself smaller, slipped out of his bonds, and said, "Let's go, master."

"Save us too, elder brother," pleaded a worried Friar Sand. "Shut up, shut up," Monkey replied, then freed Sanzang, Pig and Friar Sand, straightened his tunic, tightened his belt, saddled the horse, collected their luggage from under the eaves, and went out through the temple gates with the others. "Go and cut down four of the willow – trees by that cliff," he told Pig, who asked, "Whatever do you want them for?"

"I've got a use for them," Monkey replied. "Bring them here immediately."

The idiot Pig, who certainly had brute strength, went and felled each of them with a single bite, and came back holding them all in his arms. Monkey stripped off their tops and branches and told his two fellow – disciples to take the trunks back in and tie them up with the ropes as they themselves had been tied up.

Then Monkey recited a spell, bit the tip of his tongue open, and spat blood over the trees. At his shout of

"Change!" one of the trees turned into Sanzang, one turned into Monkey, and the other two became Friar Sand and Pig. They were all perfect likenesses; when questioned they would reply, and when called by their names they responded. The three disciples then hurried back to their master, and once more they traveled all night without stopping as they fled from the Wuzhuang Temple.

Chapter 25

By the time it was dawn the venerable Sanzang was swaying to and fro as he dozed in the saddle. "Master,"

called Monkey when he noticed, "you're hopeless. You're a man of religion – – how can you be finding it so exhausting? I can do without sleep for a thousand nights not feeling a bit tired. You'd better dismount and spare yourself the humiliation of being laughed at by a

passer—by. Take a rest in one of the places under this hill where the wind is stored and the vapours gather before we go any further."

We shall leave them resting beside the path to tell how the Great Immortal got up at dawn, ate his meatless breakfast, and went to the hall. "Today Tang Sanzang is to be whipped," he announced as he sent for the lash.

The junior whirled it around and said to the Tang Priest, "I'm going to flog you."

"Flog away," the willow tree replied.

When he had given it thirty resounding lashes he whirled the whip around once more and said to Pig, "Now I'm going to flog you."

"Flog away," the willow tree replied.

When he came to flog Friar Sand, he too told him to go ahead. But when he came to flog Monkey, the real Monkey on the road shuddered and said, "Oh, no!"

"What do you mean?" Sanzang asked.

"When I turned the four willow trees into the four of us I thought that as he had me flogged twice yesterday he wouldn't flog me again today, but now he's lashing the magic body, my real body is feeling the pain. I'm putting an end to this magic." With that he hastily recited an incantation to break the spell.

Look at the terror of the Taoist boys as they throw down their leather whips and report, "Master, at first we were flogging the Priest from the Great Tang, but all we are flogging now are willow trunks. The Great Immortal laughed bitterly on hearing this and was full of admiration.

"Brother Monkey really is a splendid Monkey King. I had heard that when he turned the Heavenly Palace upside—down, he could not even be caught with a Heaven and Earth Net, and now I see it must be true. I wouldn't mind your escaping, but why did you leave four willows tied up here to impersonate you? He shall be shown no mercy. After him!" As the words "After him" left his mouth, the Great Immortal sprang up on a cloud and looked West to see the monks carrying their bundles and spurring their horse as they went on their way. Bringing his cloud down he shouted, "Where are you going, Monkey? Give me back my manfruit tree."

"We're done for," exclaimed Pig, "our enemy's come back."

"Put all your piety away for now, master," said Monkey, "while we finish him off once and for all with a bit of evil; then we'll be able to escape." The Tang Priest shivered and shook on hearing this, and before he could answer, the three disciples rushed forward, Friar Sand wielding his staff, Pig with his rake held high, and the Great Sage Monkey brandishing his iron cudgel. They surrounded the Great Immortal in mid – air and struck wildly at him. There are some verses about this terrible fight: Monkey did not know that the Immortal Zhen Yuan,

The Conjoint Lord of the Age, had even deeper powers.

Chapter 25

While the three magic weapons fiercely whirled,

His deer – tail fly – whisk gently waved.

Parrying to left and right, he moved to and fro,

Blocking blows from front and back he let them rush around.

When night gave way to dawn they still were locked in combat.

If they tarried here they would never reach the Western Heaven.

The three of them went for him with their magic weapons, but the Great Immortal kept them at bay with his fly – whisk. After about an hour he opened wide his sleeve and caught up master, disciples, horse, and baggage in it once more. Then he turned his cloud around and went back to his temple, where all the Immortals greeted him. After taking his seat in the hall he took them out of his sleeve one by one. He had the Tang Priest tied to a stunted locust tree at the foot of the steps, with Pig and Friar Sand tied to trees next to him. Monkey was tied up upside – down, which made him think that he was going to be tortured and interrogated. When Monkey was tightly bound, the Great Immortal sent for ten long turban – cloths.

"What a kind gentleman, Pig," said Monkey, "he's sent for some cloth to make sleeves for us – – with a bit less he could have made us

cassocks." The junior Immortals fetched home – woven cloth, and on being told by the Great Immortal to wrap up Pig and Friar Sand with it, they came forward to do so.

"Excellent," said Monkey, "excellent – – you're being encoffined alive." Within a few moments the three of them were wrapped up, and lacquer was then sent for. The Immortals quickly fetched some lacquer that they had tapped and dried themselves, with which they painted the three bandaged bodies all over except for the heads.

"Never mind about our heads, sir," said Pig, "but please leave us a hole at the bottom to shit through."

The Great Immortal then sent for a huge cauldron, at which Monkey said with a laugh, "You're in luck, Pig. I think they must have brought the cauldron out to cook us some rice in."

"Fine," said Pig, "I hope they give us some rice first – – we'll make much better – looking ghosts if we die with our bellies full."

The Immortals carried out the large cauldron and put it under the steps, and the Great Immortal called for dry wood to be stacked up round it and set ablaze. "Ladle it full of pure oil," he commanded, "and when it is hot enough to bubble, deep – fry Monkey in it to pay me back for my manfruit."

Monkey was secretly delighted to hear this. "This is just what I want," He thought. "I haven't had a bath for ages, and my skin's getting rather itchy. I'd thoroughly appreciate a hot bath." Very soon the oil was bubbling and Monkey was having reservations: he was afraid that the Immortal's magic might be hard for him to fathom, and that at first he might be unable to use his limbs in the cauldron. Hastily looking around him, he saw that there was a sundial to the East of the dais and a stone lion to the West. Monkey rolled towards it with a spring, bit off the end of his tongue, spurted blood all over the stone lion, and shouted "Change," at which it turned into his own image, tied up in a bundle like himself. Then he extracted his spirit and went up into the clouds, from where he looked down at the Taoists.

Chapter 25

It was just at this moment that the junior Immortals reported, "The

oil's boiling hard."

"Carry Monkey down to it," the Great Immortal ordered, but when four of them tried to pick him up they could not. Eight then tried and failed, and four more made no difference. "This earth–infatuated ape is immovable," they said. "He may be small, but he's very solid." Twelve junior Immortals were then told to pick him up with the aid of carrying–poles, and when they threw him in there was a loud crash as drops of oil splashed about, raising blisters all over the junior Immortals' faces. "There's a hole in the cauldron– –it's started leaking," the scalded Immortals cried, but before the words were out of their mouths the oil had all run out through the broken bottom of the cauldron. They realized that they had thrown a stone lion into it.

"Damn that ape for his insolence," said the Great Immortal in a terrible rage. "How dare he play his tricks in my presence! I don't mind so much about your getting away, but how dare you wreck my cauldron? It's useless trying to catch him, and even if you could it would be like grinding mercury out of sand, or trying to hold a shadow or the wind. Forget about him, let him go. Untie Tang Sanzang instead and fetch another pot.

We can fry him to avenge the destruction of the tree." The junior Immortals set to and began to tear off Sanzang's lacquered bandages.

Monkey could hear all this clearly from mid–air. "The master will be done for," he thought. "If he goes into that cauldron it'll kill him. Then he'll be cooked, and after four or five fryings he'll be eaten as a really tender piece of monk. I must go back down and save him." The splendid Great Sage brought his cloud down to land, clasped his hands in front of him, and said, "Don't spoil the lacquered bands, and don't fry my master. Put me in the cauldron of oil instead."

"I'll get you, you baboon," raged the Great Immortal in astonishment. "Why did you use one of your tricks to smash my cooking pot?"

"You must expect to be smashed up if you meet me– –and what business is it of mine anyhow? I was going to accept your kind offer of some hot oil, but I was desperate for a shit and a piss, and if I'd done them in your cauldron, I'd have spoilt your oil and your food wouldn't have tasted right. Now I've done my stuff I'm ready for the cauldron. Please fry me instead of my master." The Great Immortal laughed coldly, came out of the hall, and seized him.

If you don't know how the story goes or how he escaped, listen to the

explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 26

Sun Wukong Looks for the Formula in the Three Islands

Guanyin Revives the Tree with a Spring of Sweet Water

As the poem goes,

When living in the world you must be forbearing;

Patience is essential when training oneself.

Although it's often said that violence is good business,

Think before you act, and never bully or be angry.

True gentlemen who never strive are famed for ever;

The virtue–loving sages are renowned to this day.

Strong men always meet stronger than themselves,

And end up as failures who are in the wrong.

The Great Immortal Zhen Yuan held Monkey in his hand and said, "I've heard about your powers and your fame, but this time you have gone too far. Even if you manage to remove yourself, you won't escape my clutches. You and I shall argue it out as far as the Western Heaven, and even if you see that Buddha of yours, you'll still have to give me back my manfruit tree first. Don't try any of your magic now."

"What a small–minded bloke you are, sir," Monkey replied with a laugh. "If you want your tree brought back to life, there's no problem. If you'd told me earlier we could have been spared all this quarrelling."

"If you hadn't made trouble I'd have forgiven you," said the Great Immortal.

"Would you agree to release my master if I gave you back the tree alive?" Monkey asked.

"If your magic is strong enough to revive the tree," the Great Immortal replied, "I shall bow to you eight times and take you as my brother."

"That's easy then," said Monkey. "Release them and I guarantee to give you back your tree alive."

Trusting him not to escape, the Great Immortal ordered that Sanzang, Pig and Friar Sand be set free. "Master,"

said Friar Sand, "I wonder what sort of trick Monkey is up to."

"I'll tell you what sort of trick," retorted Pig. "A pleading for favour trick. The tree's dead and can't possibly be revived. Finding a cure for the tree is an excuse for going off by himself without giving a damn for you or me."

"He wouldn't dare abandon us," said Sanzang. "Let's ask him where he's going to find a doctor for it.

Monkey," he continued, "why did you fool the Immortal elder into untying us?"

"Every word I said was true," Monkey replied. "I wasn't leading him on."

"Where will you go to find a cure?"

"There's an old saying that 'cures come from over the sea'. I'll go to the Eastern Sea and travel round the Three Islands and Ten Continents visiting the venerable Immortals and sages to find a formula for bringing the dead back to life. I promise that I'll cure that tree."

"When will you come back?"

Chapter 26

"I'll only need three days."

"In that case I'll give you three days. If you are back within that time, that will be all right, but if you are late I shall recite that spell."

"I'll do as you say," said Monkey.

He immediately straightened up his tiger–skin kilt, went out through the door, and said to the Great Immortal,

"Don't worry, sir, I'll soon be back. Mind you look after my master well. Give him tea three times a day and six meals, and don't leave any out. If you do, I'll settle that score when I come back, and I'll start by holing the bottoms of all your pans. If his clothes get dirty, wash them for him. I won't stand for it if he looks sallow, and if he loses weight you'll never see the back of me."

"Go away, go away," the Great Immortal replied. "I certainly won't let him go hungry."

The splendid Monkey King left the Wuzhuang Temple with a bound of his somersault cloud and headed for the Eastern Sea. He went through the air as fast as a flash of lightning or a shooting star, and he was soon in the blessed land of Penglai. As he landed his cloud he looked around him and saw that it was indeed a wonderful place. A poem about it goes:

A great and sacred land where the Immortal sages

Still the waves as they come and go.

The shade of the jasper throne cools the heart of the sky;

The radiance of the great gate–pillars shimmers high above the sea.

Hidden in the coloured mists are flutes of jade;

The moon and the stars shine on the golden leviathan.

The Queen Mother of the Western Pool often comes here

To give her peaches to the Three Immortals.

Gazing at the enchanted land that spread out before him, Brother Monkey entered Penglai. As he was walking along, he noticed three old men sitting round a chess table under the shade of a pine tree outside a cloud–wreathed cave. The one watching the game was the Star of Longevity, and the players were the Star of Blessings and the Star of Office.

"Greetings, respected younger brothers," Monkey called to them, and when they saw him they swept the pieces away, returned his

salutation, and said, "Why have you come here, Great Sage?"

"To see you," he replied.

"I've heard," said the Star of Longevity, "that you have given up the Way for the sake of the Buddha, and have thrown aside your life to protect the Tang Priest on his journey to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. How can you spare the time from your endless crossings of waters and mountains just to see us?"

"To tell you the truth," said Monkey, "I was on my way to the West until a spot of bother held us up. I wonder if you could do me a small favour."

"Where did this happen?" asked the Star of Blessings, "what has been holding you up? Please tell us and we'll deal with it."

"We've been held up because we went via the Wuzhuang Temple on the Mountain of Infinite Longevity," said Monkey.

"But the Wuzhuang Temple is the palace of the Great Immortal Zhen Yuan," exclaimed the three Immortals with alarm, "don't say that you've stolen some of his manfruit!"

"What if I had stolen and eaten some?" asked Monkey with a grin.

"You ignorant ape," the three Immortals replied. "A mere whiff of that fruit makes a man live to be three hundred and sixty, and anyone who eats one will live forty–seven thousand years. They are called

'Grass–returning Cinnabar of Ten Thousand Longevities,' and our Way hasn't a patch on them. Manfruit makes you as immortal as Heaven with the greatest of ease, while it takes us goodness knows how long to nourish our essence, refine the spirit, preserve our soul, harmonize water and fire, capture the *kan* to fill out the *li.* How can you possibly ask whether it would matter? There is no other miraculous tree like it on earth."

"Miraculous tree," scoffed Monkey, "miraculous tree! I've put an end to that miraculous tree."

"What? Put an end to it?" the three Immortals asked, struck with horror.

"When I was in his temple the other day," Monkey said, "the Great Immortal wasn't at home. There were only a couple of boys who received my master and gave him two manfruits. My master didn't know what they were and said that they were newborn babies; he refused to eat them. The boys took them away and ate them themselves instead of offering them to the rest of us, so I went and pinched three, one for each of us disciples.

Those disrespectful boys swore and cursed at us no end, which made me so angry that I knocked their tree over with a single blow. All the fruit disappeared, the leaves fell, the roots came out, and the branches were smashed up. The tree was dead. To our surprise the two boys locked us in, but I opened the lock and we escaped. When the Great Immortal came home the next day, he came after us and found us. Our conversation didn't go too smoothly and we started to fight him, but he dodged us, spread his sleeve out, and caught us all up in it. After being tied up then flogged and interrogated for a day, we escaped again, but he caught up with us and captured us again. Although he had not an inch of steel on him, he fought us off with his whisk, and even with our three weapons we couldn't touch him. He caught us the same way as before. He had my master and two brothers wrapped up in bandages and lacquered, and was going to throw me into a cauldron of oil, but I used a trick to take my body away and escape, smashing that pan of his. Now that he has realized he can't catch me and keep me he's getting a bit scared of me, and I had a good talk with him. I told him that if he released my master and my brothers I'd guarantee to cure the tree and bring it back to life, which would satisfy both parties. As it occurred to me that 'cures come from over the sea,' I came here specially to visit you three brothers of mine. If you have any cures that will bring a tree back to life, please tell me one so that I can get the Tang Priest out of trouble as quickly as possible."

"You ape," the Three Stars said gloomily when they heard this. "You don't know who you're up against. That Master Zhen Yuan is the Patriarch of the Immortals of the earth, and we are the chiefs of the divine Chapter 26

Immortals. Although you have become a heavenly Immortal, you are still only one of the irregulars of the Great Monad, not one of the elite. You'll never be able to escape his clutches. If you'd killed some animal, bird, insect or reptile, Great Sage, we could have given you some pills made from sticky millet to bring it back to life, but that manfruit tree is a magic one and can't possibly be revived. There's no cure, none at all." When he heard that there was no cure, Monkey's brows locked in a frown, and his forehead was creased in a thousand wrinkles.

"Great Sage," said the Star of Blessing, "even though we have no cure here, there may be one somewhere else.

Why be so worried?"

"If there were anywhere else for me to go," Monkey replied, "it would be easy. It wouldn't even matter if I had to go to the furthest corner of the ocean, or to the cliff at the end of the sky, or if I had to penetrate the Thirty–sixth Heaven. But the trouble is that the Tang Patriarch is very strict and has given me a time–limit of three days. If I'm not back in three days he'll recite the Band–tightening Spell."

"Splendid, splendid," laughed the three stars. "If you weren't restricted by that spell you'd go up to Heaven again."

"Calm down, Great Sage," said the Star of Longevity, "there's no need to worry. Although that Great Immortal is senior to us he is a friend of ours, and as we haven't visited him for a long time and would like to do you a favour we'll go and see him. We'll explain things for you and tell that Tang monk not to recite the Band–tightening Spell. We won't go away until you come back, however long you take, even if it's a lot longer that three to five days."

"Thank you very much," said Monkey. "May I ask you to set out now as I'm off?" With that he took his leave.

The Three Stars went off on beams of auspicious light to the Wuzhuang Temple, where all present heard cranes calling in the sky as the three of them arrived.

The void was bathed in blessed glow,

The Milky Way heavy with fragrance.

A thousand wisps of coloured mist enveloped the feather–clad ones;
A single cloud supported the immortal feet.

Green and red phoenixes circled and soared,

As the aroma in their sleeves wafted over the earth.

These dragons leant on their staffs and smiled,

And jade – white beards waved before their chests.

Their youthful faces were untroubled by sorrow,

Their majestic bodies were rich with blessing.

They carried star – chips to count their age,

And at their waists hung gourds and talismans.

Their life is infinitely long,

And they live on the Ten Continents and Three Islands.

They often come to bring blessings to mortals,

Spreading good things a hundred – fold among humans.

The glory and blessings of the universe

Come now as happiness unlimited.

As these three elders visit the Great Immortal on auspicious light,
There is no end to good fortune and peace.

"Master," the immortal youths rushed to report when they saw them, "the Three Stars from the sea are here."

The Great Immortal Zhen Yuan, who was talking with the Tang Priest, came down the steps to welcome them when he heard this.

When Pig saw the Star of Longevity he went up and tugged at his clothes. "I haven't seen you for ages, you meat – headed old fellow," he said with a grin. "You're getting very free and easy, turning up without a hat."

With these words he thrust his own clerical hat on the star's head, clapped his hands, and roared with laughter.

"Great, great. You've been 'capped and promoted' all right." Flinging the hat down, the Star of Longevity cursed him for a disrespectful moron.

"I'm no moron," said Pig, but you're all slaves."

"You're most certainly a moron," the Star of Blessing replied, "so how dare you call us slaves?"

"If you aren't slaves then," Pig retorted, "why do people always ask you to 'bring us long life,' 'bring us blessings,' and 'bring us a good job?'"

Sanzang shouted at Pig to go away, then quickly tidied himself up and bowed to the Three Stars. The Three Stars greeted the Great Immortal as befitted members of a younger generation, after which they all sat down.

"We have not seen your illustrious countenance for a long time," the Star of Office said, "which shows our great lack of respect. The reason we come to see you now is because the Great Sage Monkey has made trouble Chapter 26

in your immortal temple."

"Has Monkey been to Penglai?" the Great Immortal asked.

"Yes," replied the Star of Longevity. "He came to our place to ask for a formula to restore the elixir tree that he killed. As we have no cure for it, he has had to go elsewhere in search of it. We are afraid that if he exceeds the three–day time–limit the holy priest has imposed, the Band–tightening Spell may be said. We have come in the first place to pay our respects and in the second to ask for an extension of the limit."

"I won't recite it, I promise," answered Sanzang as soon as he heard this.

As they were talking Pig came rushing in again to grab hold of the Star of Blessing and demand some fruit from him. He started to feel in

the star's sleeves and rummage round his waist, pulling his clothes apart as he searched everywhere.

"What sort of behavior is that?" asked Sanzang with a smile.

"I'm not misbehaving," said Pig. "This is what's meant by the saying, 'blessings wherever you look.'" Sanzang shouted at him to go away again. The idiot withdrew slowly, glaring at the Star of Blessing with unwavering hatred in his eyes.

"I wasn't angry with you, you moron," said the star, "so why do you hate me so?"

"I don't hate you," said Pig. "This is what they call 'turning the head and seeing blessing.'" As the idiot was going out he saw a young boy came in with four tea ladles, looking for bowls in the abbot's cell in which to put fruit and serve tea. Pig seized one of the ladles, ran to the main hall of the temple, snatched up a hand–bell, and started striking it wildly. He was enjoying himself enormously when the Great Immortal said,

"This monk gets more and more disrespectful."

"I'm not being disrespectful," Pig replied. "I'm 'ringing in happiness for the four seasons.'"

While Pig was having his jokes and making trouble, Monkey had bounded away from Penglai by auspicious cloud and come to the magic mountain Fangzhang. This was a really wonderful place. As the poem goes, The towering Fangzhang is another heaven,

Where gods and Immortals meet in the Palace of the Great Unity.

The purple throne illuminates the road to the Three Pure Ones, The scent of flowers and trees drifts among the clouds.

Many a golden phoenix comes to rejoice around its flowery portals; What makes the fields of magical mushrooms glisten like jade?

Pale peaches and purple plums are newly ripened,

Ready to give even longer life to the Immortals.

But as Monkey brought his cloud down he was in no mood to enjoy the view. As he was walking along he smelt a fragrance in the wind, heard the cry of the black stork, and saw an Immortal: The sky was filled with radiant light,

As multicolored clouds shone and glowed.

Red phoenixes looked brighter than the flowers in their beaks; Sweetly sang green ones as they danced in flight.

His blessings were as great as the Eastern Sea, his age that of a mountain; Yet his face was a child's and his body was strong.

In a bottle he kept his pills of eternal youth,

And a charm for everlasting life hung from his waist.

He had often sent blessings down to mankind,

Several times saving mortals from difficulties.

He once gave longer life to Emperor Wu,

And always went to the Peach Banquets at the Jade Pool.

He taught all monks to cast off worldly fates;

His explanations of the great Way were clear as lightning.

He had crossed the seas to pay his respects,

And had seen the Buddha on the Vulture Peak.

His title was Lord Emperor of Eastern Glory,

The highest–ranked Immortal of the mists and clouds.

When Brother Monkey saw him he hailed him with the words, "I salute you, Lord Emperor." The Lord Emperor hastened to return his greeting and say, "I should have welcomed you properly, Great Sage. May I ask you home for some tea?" He led Monkey by the hand to his palace of cowrie–shells, where there was no end of jasper pools and jade towers. They were sitting waiting for their tea when a boy appeared from behind Chapter 26

an emerald screen. This is how he looked:

A Taoist robe that sparkled with color hung from his body,

And light gleamed from the silken sash round his waist.

On his head he wore a turban with the sign of the stars of the Dipper,
And the grass sandals on his feet had climbed all the magical mountains.

He was refining his True Being, shuffling off his shell,

And when he had finished he would reach unbounded bliss.

His understanding had broken through to the origins,

And his master knew that he was free from mistakes.

Avoiding fame and enjoying the present he had won long life

And did not care about the passing of time.

He had been along the crooked portico, climbed to the precious hall,
And three times received the peaches of Heaven.

Clouds of incense appeared to rise from behind the emerald screen;
This young Immortal was Dongfang Shuo himself.

"So you're here, you young thief," said Monkey with a smile when he saw him. "There are no peaches for you to steal here in the Lord Emperor's palace."

Dongfang Shuo greeted him respectfully and replied, "What have you come for, you old thief? My master doesn't keep any pills of immortality here for you to pinch."

"Stop talking nonsense, Manqian," the Lord Emperor shouted, "and bring some tea." Manqian was Dongfang Shuo's Taoist name. He hurried inside and brought out two cups of tea.

When the two of them had drunk it, Monkey said, "I came here to ask you to do something for me. I wonder if you'd be prepared to."

"What is it?" the Lord Emperor asked. "Do tell me."

"I have been escorting the Tang Priest on his journey to the West," Monkey replied, "and our route took us via the Wuzhuang Temple on the Mountain of Infinite Longevity. The youths there were so ill-mannered that I lost my temper and knocked their manfruit tree over. We've been held up for a while as a result, and the Tang Chapter 26

Priest cannot get away, which is why I have come to ask you, sir, to give me a formula that will cure it. I do hope that you will be good enough to agree."

"You thoughtless ape," the Lord Emperor replied, "you make trouble wherever you go. Master Zhen Yuan of the Wuzhunang Temple has the sacred title Conjoint Lord of the Age, and he is the Patriarch of the Immortals of the Earth. Why ever did you clash with him? That manfruit tree of his is Grass-returning Cinnabar. It was criminal enough of you to steal some of the fruit, and knocking the tree over makes it impossible for him ever to make it up with you."

"True," said Monkey. "When we escaped he caught up with us and swept us into his sleeve as if we were so many sweat-rags, which made me furious. However, he had to let me go and look for a formula that would cure it, which is why I've come to ask your help."

"I have a nine-phased returning pill of the Great Monad, but it can only bring animate objects back to life, not trees. Trees are lives compounded of the Wood and Earth elements and nurtured by Heaven and Earth. If it were an ordinary mortal tree I could bring it back to life, but the Mountain of Infinite Longevity is the blessed land of a former heaven, the Wuzhuang Temple is the Cave Paradise of the Western Continent of Cattle-gift, and the manfruit tree is the life-root from the time when Heaven and Earth were separated. How could it possibly be revived? I have no formula, none at all."

"In that case I must take my leave," replied Monkey, and when the Lord Emperor tried to detain him with a cup of jade nectar he said, "This is too urgent to allow me to stay." He rode his cloud back to the island of Yingzhou, another wonderful place, as this poem shows:

Trees of pearls glowed with a purple haze;

The Yingzhou palaces led straight to the heavens.

Blue hills, green rivers, and the beauty of exquisite flowers; Jade mountains as hard as iron.

Pheasants called at the sunrise over the sea,

Long – lived phoenixes breathe in the red clouds.

People, do not look so hard at the scenery in your jar:

Beyond the world of phenomena is an eternal spring.

On reaching Yingzhou he saw a number of white – haired Immortals with the faces of children playing chess and drinking under a pearl tree at the foot of a cinnabar cliff. They were laughing and singing. As the poem says, there were

Light – filled auspicious clouds,

Perfume floating in a blessed haze.

Brilliant phoenixes singing at the mouth of a cave,

Black cranes dancing on a mountain top.

Pale green lotus – root and peaches helped their wine down,

Pears and fiery red dates gave them a thousand years of life.

Neither of them had ever heard an imperial edict,

But each was entered on the list of Immortals.

They drifted and floated with the waves,

Free and easy in unsullied elegance.

The passage of the days could not affect them;

Their freedom was guaranteed by Heaven and Earth.

Black apes come in pairs,

Looking most charming as they present fruit;

White deer, bowing two by two,

Thoughtfully offer flowers.

These old men were certainly living a free and happy life. "How about letting me play with you?" Monkey shouted at the top of his voice, and when the Immortals saw him they hurried over to welcome him. There is a poem to prove it that goes:

When the magic root of the manfruit tree was broken;

The Great Sage visited the Immortals in search of a cure.

Winding their way through the vermilion mist, the Nine Ancients
Came out of the precious forest to greet him.

Monkey, who knew the Nine Ancients, said with a smile, "You nine brothers seem to be doing very nicely."

"If you had stayed on straight and narrow in the old days, Great sage," they replied, "and not wrecked the Heavenly Palace you would be doing even better that we are. Now we hear that you have reformed and are going West to visit the Buddha. How did you manage the time off to come here?" Monkey told them how he was searching for a formula to cure the tree.

"What a terrible thing to do," they exclaimed in horror, "what a terrible thing. We honestly have no cure at all."

"In that case I must take my leave of you."

The Nine Ancients tried to detain him with jasper wine and jade lotus－root, but Monkey refused to sit down, and stayed on his feet while he drank only one cup of wine and ate only one piece of lotus－root. Then he hurried away from Yingzhou and back to the Great Eastern Ocean. When he saw that Potaraka was not far away, he brought his cloud down to land on the Potara Crag, where he saw the Bodhisattva

Guanyin expounding the scriptures and preaching the Buddha's Law to all the great gods of heaven, Moksa, and the dragon maiden in the Purple Bamboo Grove. A poem about it goes: Thick the mists round the lofty city of the sea's mistress,

And no end to the greater marvels to be seen.

The Shaolin Temple really has the true flavor,

With the scent of flowers and fruit and the trees all red.

The Bodhisattva saw Monkey arrive and ordered the Great Guardian God of the Mountain to go and welcome him. The god emerged from the bamboo grove and shouted, "Where are you going, Monkey?"

"You bear monster," Monkey shouted back, "how dare you address me as 'Monkey'? If I hadn't spared your life that time you'd have been just a demon's corpse on the Black Wind Mountain. Now you've joined the Bodhisattva, accepted enlightenment, and come to live on this blessed island where you hear the Law being taught all the time. Shouldn't you address me as 'sir?'"

It was indeed thanks to Monkey that the black bear had been enlightened and was now guarding the Bodhisattva's Potaraka as one of the great gods of heaven, so all he could do was to force a smile and say,

"The ancients said, Great Sage, that a gentleman does not bear grudges. Why should you care about what you're called? Anyhow, the Bodhisattva has sent me to welcome you." Monkey then became grave and serious as he went into the Purple Bamboo Grove with the Great God and did obeisance to the Bodhisattva.

"How far has the Tang Priest got, Monkey?" she asked.

"He has reached the Mountain of Infinite Longevity in the Western Continent of Cattle—gift," Monkey replied.

"Have you met the Great Immortal Zhen Yuan who lives in the Wuzhuang Temple on that mountain?" she asked.

"As your disciple didn't meet the Great Immortal Zhen Yuan when I was in the Wuzhuang Temple," replied Monkey, bowing down to the ground, "I destroyed his manfruit tree and offended him. As a result my master is in a very difficult position and can make no progress."

"You wretched ape," said the Bodhisattva angrily now that she knew about it, "you have no conscience at all.

That manfruit tree of his is the life–root from the time when Heaven and Earth were separated, and Master Zhen Yuan is the Patriarch of the Earth's Immortals, which means even I have to show him a certain respect.

Why ever did you harm his tree?"

Monkey bowed once more and said, "I really didn't know. He was away that day and there were only two immortal youths to look after us. When Pig heard that they had this fruit he wanted to try one, so I stole three for him and we had one each. They swore at us no end when they found out, so I lost my temper and knocked the tree over. When he came back the next day he chased us and caught us all up in his sleeve. We were tied up and flogged for a whole day. We got away that night but he caught up with us and put us in his sleeve again. All our escape attempts failed, so I promised him I'd put the tree right. I've been searching for a formula all over the seas and been to all three islands of Immortals, but the gods and Immortals are all useless, which is why I decided to come and worship you, Bodhisattva, and tell you all about it. I beg you in your mercy to grant me a formula so that I can save the Tang Priest and have him on his way West again as soon as possible.

"Why didn't you come and see me earlier instead of searching the islands for it?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"I'm in luck," thought Monkey with delight when he heard this, "I'm in luck. The Bodhisattva must have a formula." He went up to her and pleaded for it again.

"The 'sweet dew' in this pure vase of mine," she said, "is an excellent cure for magic trees and plants."

"Has it ever been tried out?" Monkey asked.

"Yes," she said. "How?" he asked.

"Some years ago Lord Lao Zi beat me at gambling," she replied, "and took my willow sprig away with him.

He put it in his elixir—refining furnace and burnt it to a cinder before sending it back to me. I put it back in the vase, and a day and a night later it was as green and leafy as ever."

"I'm really in luck," said Monkey, "really in luck. If it can bring a cinder back to life, something that has only been pushed over should be easy." The Bodhisattva instructed her subjects to look after the grove as she was going away for a while. Then she took up her vase, and her white parrot went in front singing while Monkey followed behind. As the poem goes,

The jade—haired golden one is hard to describe to mortals;

She truly is a compassionate deliverer.

Although in aeons past she had known the spotless Buddha,

Now she had acquired a human form.

After several lives in the sea of suffering she had purified the waves,
And in her heart there was no speck of dust.

Chapter 26

The sweet dew that had long undergone the miraculous Law

Was bound to give the magic tree eternal life.

The Great Immortal and the Three Stars were still in lofty conversation when they saw Monkey bring his cloud down and heard him shout, "The Bodhisattva's here. Come and welcome her at once." The Three Stars and Master Zheng Yuan hurried out with Sanzang and his disciples to greet her. On bringing her cloud to a stop, she first talked with Master Zhen Yuan and then greeted the Three Stars, after which she climbed to her seat. Monkey then led the Tang Priest, Pig, and Friar Sand out to do obeisance before the steps, and all the Immortals in the temple came to bow to her as well.

"There's no need to dither about, Great Immortal," said Monkey. "Get an incense table ready at once and ask the Bodhisattva to cure that

whatever – it – is tree of yours." The Great Immortal Zhen Yuan bowed to the Bodhisattva and thanked her:

"How could I be so bold as to trouble the Bodhisattva with my affairs?"

"The Tang Priest is my disciple, and Monkey has offended you, so it is only right that I should make up for the loss of your priceless tree."

"In that case there is no need for you to refuse," said the Three Stars. "May we invite you, Bodhisattva, to come into our orchard and take a look?"

The Great Sage had an incense table set up and the orchard swept, then he asked the Bodhisattva to lead the way. The Three Stars followed behind. Sanzang, his disciples, and all the Immortals of the temple went into the orchard to look, and they saw the tree lying on the ground with the earth torn open, its roots laid bare, its leaves fallen and its branches withered. "Put your hand out, Monkey," said the Bodhisattva, and Brother Monkey stretched out his left hand. The Bodhisattva dipped her willow spray into the sweet dew in her vase, then used it to write a spell to revive the dead on the palm of Monkey's hand. She told him to place it on the roots of the tree until he saw water coming out. Monkey clenched his fist and tucked it under the roots; before long a spring of clear water began to form a pool.

"That water must not be sullied by vessels made of any of the Five Elements, so you will have to scoop it out with a jade ladle. If you prop the tree up and pour the water on it from the very top, its bark and trunk will knit together, its leaves will sprout again, the branches will be green once more, and the fruit will reappear."

"Fetch a jade ladle this moment, young Taoists," said Monkey. "We poor monks have no jade ladle in our destitute temple. We only have jade tea – bowls and wine – cups. Would they do?"

"As long as they are jade and can scoop out water they will do," the Bodhisattva replied. "Bring them out and try." The Great Immortal then told some boys to fetch the twenty or thirty teabowls and the forty or fifty wine – cups and ladle the clear water out from under the roots. Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand put their shoulders under the tree, raised it upright, and banked it up with earth. Then they presented the sweet spring water cup by cup to the Bodhisattva, who sprinkled it lightly on the tree with her spray of willow and recited an incantation.

When a little later the water had all been sprinkled on the tree the leaves really did become as dense and green as ever, and there were twenty – three manfruits growing there.

Pure Wind and Bright Moon, the two immortal boys, said, "When the fruit disappeared the other day there were only twenty – two of them; so why is there an extra one now that it has come back to life?"

"'Time shows the truth about a man,'" Monkey replied. "I only stole three that day. The other one fell on the ground, and the local deity told me that this treasure always entered earth when it touched it. Pig accused me of taking it as a bit of extra for myself and blackened my reputation, but at long last the truth has come out."

"The reason why I did not use vessels made from the Five Elements was because I knew that this kind of fruit is allergic to them," said the Bodhisattva. The Great Immortal, now extremely happy, had the golden rod fetched at once and knocked down ten of the fruits. He invited the Bodhisattva and the Three Stars to come to the main hall of the temple to take part a Manfruit Feast to thank them for their labors. All the junior Immortals arranged tables, chairs, and cinnabar bowls, The Bodhisattva was asked to take the seat of honour with the Three Stars on her left, the Tang Priest on her right, and Master Zhen Yuan facing her as the host.

They ate one fruit each, and there are some lines about it:

In the ancient earthly paradise on the Mountain of Infinite Longevity
The manfruit ripens once in nine thousand years.

When the magic roots were bared and the branches dead,

The sweet dew brought leaves and fruit back to life.

The happy meeting of the Three Stars was predestined;

It was fated that the four monks would encounter one another.

Now that they have eaten the manfruit at this feast,

They will all enjoy everlasting youth.

The Bodhisattva and the Three Stars ate one each, as did the Tang Priest, who realized at last that this was an Immortal's treasure, and Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand. Master Zhen Yuan had one to keep them company and the Immortals of the temple divided the last one between them. Monkey thanked the Bodhisattva, who went back to Potaraka, and saw the Three Stars off on their journey home to the island of Penglai.

Master Zhen Yuan set out some non – alcoholic wine and made Monkey his sworn brother. This was a case of

"if you don't fight you can't make friends," and their two households were now united. That night Sanzang and his disciples went to bed feeling very happy. That venerable priest had now Been lucky enough to eat the Grass – returning Cinnabar,

Gaining long life, and resistance to fiends and monsters.

Listen to the next installment to hear how they took their leave the next day.

Chapter 27

The Corpse Fiend Thrice Tricks Tang Sanzang

The Holy Monk Angrily Dismisses the Handsome Monkey King

At dawn the next day Sanzang and his three disciples packed their things before setting off. Now that Master Zhen Yuan had made Monkey his sworn brother and was finding him so congenial, he did not want to let him go, so he entertained him for another five or six days. Sanzang had really become a new man, and was livelier and healthier now that he had eaten the Grass – returning Cinnabar. His determination to fetch the scriptures was too strong to let him waste any more time, so there was nothing for it but to be on their way.

Soon after they had set out again, master and disciples saw a high mountain in front of them. "I'm afraid that the mountain ahead may be too steep for the horse," Sanzang said, "so we must think this over carefully."

"Don't worry, master," said Monkey, "we know how to cope." He went ahead of the horse with his cudgel over his shoulder and cleared a path up to the top of the cliff. He saw no end of Row upon row of craggy peaks,

Twisting beds of torrents.

Tigers and wolves were running in packs,

Deer and muntjac moving in herds.

Countless river – deer darted around.

And the mountains was covered with fox and hare.

Thousand – food pythons,

Ten – thousand – fathom snakes;

The great pythons puffed out murky clouds,

The enormous snakes breathed monstrous winds.

Brambles and thorns spread beside the paths,

Pines and cedars stood elegant on the ridge.

There were wild fig – trees wherever the eye could see,

And sweet – scented flowers as far as the horizon.

The mountain's shadow fell North of the ocean,

Chapter 27

383

Journey to the West

The clouds parted South of the handle of the Dipper.

The towering cliffs were as ancient as the primal Essence,

The majestic crags cold in the sunlight.

Sanzang was immediately terrified, so Monkey resorted to some of his tricks. He whirled his iron cudgel and roared, at which all the wolves, snakes, tigers and leopards fled. They then started up the mountain,

and as they were crossing a high ridge Sanzang said to Monkey, "Monkey, I've been hungry all day, so would you please go and beg some food for us somewhere."

"You aren't very bright, master," Monkey replied with a grin. "We're on a mountain with no village or inn for many miles around. Even if we had money there would be nowhere to buy food, so where am I to go and beg for it?" Sanzang felt cross, so he laid into Monkey. "You ape," he said, "don't you remember how you were crushed by the Buddha in a stone cell under the Double Boundary Mountain, where you could talk but not walk? It was I who saved your life, administered the monastic vows to you, and made you my disciple. How dare you be such a slacker? Why aren't you prepared to make an effort?"

"I always make an effort," said Monkey. "I'm never lazy."

"If you're such a hard worker, go and beg some food for us. I can't manage on an empty stomach. Besides, with the noxious vapors on this mountain we'll never reach the Thunder Monastery,"

"Please don't be angry, master, and stop talking. I know your obstinate character— —if I'm too disobedient you'll say that spell. You'd better dismount and sit here while I find somebody and beg for some food."

Monkey leapt up into the clouds with a single jump, and shading his eyes with his hand he looked around.

Unfortunately he could see nothing in any direction except emptiness. There was no village or house or any other sign of human habitation among the countless trees. After looking for a long time he made out a high mountain away to the South. On its Southern slopes was a bright red patch.

Monkey brought his cloud down and said, "Master, there's something to eat." Sanzang asked him what it was.

"There's no house around here where we could ask for food," Monkey replied, "but there's a patch of red on a mountain to the South that I'm sure must be ripe wild peaches. I'll go and pick some— —they'll fill you up."

"A monk who has peaches to eat is a lucky man," said Sanzang. Monkey picked up his bowl and leapt off on a beam of light. Just watch as he flashes off in a somersault, a whistling gust of cold air. Within a moment he was picking peaches on the Southern mountain.

There is a saying that goes, "If the mountain is high it's bound to have fiends; if the ridge is steep spirits will live there." This mountain did indeed have an evil spirit who was startled by Monkey's appearance. It strode through the clouds on a negative wind, and on seeing the venerable Sanzang on the ground below thought happily, "What luck, what luck. At home they've been talking for years about a Tang Monk from the East who's going to fetch the 'Great Vehicle'; he's a reincarnation of Golden Cicada, and has an Original Body that has been purified through ten lives. Anyone who eats a piece of his flesh will live for ever. And today, at last, he's here." The evil spirit went forward to seize him, but the sight of the two great generals to Sanzang's left and right made it frightened to close in on him. Who, it wondered, were they? They were in fact Pig and Friar Sand, and for all that their powers were nothing extraordinary, Pig was really Marshal Tian Peng while Friar Sand was the Great Curtain—lifting General. It was because their former awe—inspiring qualities had not yet Chapter 27

been dissipated that the fiend did not close in. "I'll try a trick on them and see what happens," the spirit said to itself.

The splendid evil spirit stopped its negative wind in a hollow and changed itself into a girl with a face as round as the moon and as pretty as a flower. Her brow was clear and her eyes beautiful; her teeth were white and her lips red. In her left hand she held a blue earthenware pot and in her right a green porcelain jar. She headed East towards the Tang Priest.

The holy monk rested his horse on the mountain,

And suddenly noticed a pretty girl approaching.

The green sleeves over her jade fingers lightly billowed;

Golden lotus feet peeped under her trailing skirt.

The beads of sweat on her powdered face were dew on a flower,

Her dusty brow was a willow in a mist.

Carefully and closely he watched her

As she came right up to him.

"Pig, Friar Sand," said Sanzang when he saw her, "don't you see somebody coming although Monkey said that this was a desolate and uninhabited place?"

"You and Friar Sand stay sitting here while I go and take a look." The blockhead laid down his rake, straightened his tunic, put on the airs of a gentleman, and stared at the girl as he greeted her. Although he had not been sure from a distance, he could now see clearly that the girl had Bones of jade under skin as pure as ice,

A creamy bosom revealed by her neckline.

Her willow eyebrows were black and glossy,

And silver stars shone from her almond eyes.

She was as graceful as the moon,

As pure as the heavens.

Her body was like a swallow in a willow – tree,

Her voice like an oriole singing in the wood.

She was wild apple—blossom enmeshing the sun,

An opening peony full of the spring.

When the idiot Pig saw how beautiful she was his earthly desires were aroused, and he could not hold back the reckless words that came to his lips. "Where are you going, Bodhisattva," he said, "and what's that you're holding?" Although she was obviously an evil fiend he could not realize it.

"Venerable sir," the girl replied at once, "this blue pot is full of tasty rice, and the green jar contains fried wheat—balls. I've come here specially to fulfil a vow to feed monks." Pig was thoroughly delighted to hear this. He came tumbling back at breakneck speed and said to Sanzang,

"Master, 'Heaven rewards the good'. When you sent my elder brother off begging because you felt hungry, that ape went fooling around somewhere picking peaches. Besides, too many peaches turn your stomach and give you the runs. Don't you see that this girl is coming to feed us monks?"

"You stupid idiot," replied Sanzang, who was not convinced, "we haven't met a single decent person in this direction, so where could anyone come from to feed monks?"

"What's she then, master?" said Pig.

When Sanzang saw her he sprang to his feet, put his hands together in front of his chest, and said,

"Bodhisattva, where is your home? Who are you? What vow brings you here to feed monks?" Although she was obviously an evil spirit, the venerable Sanzang could not see it either. On being asked about her background by Sanzang, the evil spirit immediately produced a fine—sounding story with which to fool him.

"This mountain, which snakes and wild animals won't go near, is called White Tiger Ridge," she said. "Our home lies due West from here at the foot of it. My mother and father live there, and they are devout people who read the scriptures and feed monks from far and near. As they had no son, they asked Heaven to bless them. When I was born they wanted to marry me off to a good family, but then they

decided to find me a husband who would live in our home to look after them in their old age and see them properly buried."

"Bodhisattva, what you say can't be right," replied Sanzang. "The *Analects* say, 'When father and mother are alive, do not go on long journeys; if you have to go out, have a definite aim.' As your parents are at home and have found you a husband, you should let him fulfil your vow for you. Why ever are you walking in the mountains all by yourself, without even a servant? This is no way for a lady to behave."

The girl smiled and produced a smooth reply at once: "My husband is hoeing with some of our retainers in a hollow in the North of the mountain, reverend sir, and I am taking them this food I've cooked. As it's July and all the crops are ripening nobody can be spared to run errands, and my parents are old, so I'm taking it there myself. Now that I have met you three monks from so far away, I would like to give you this food as my parents are so pious. I hope you won't refuse our paltry offering."

"It's very good of you," said Sanzang, "but one of my disciples has gone to pick some fruit and will be back soon, so we couldn't eat any of your food. Besides, if we ate your food your husband might be angry with you when he found out, and we would get into trouble too."

As the Tang Priest was refusing to eat the food, the girl put on her most charming expression and said, "My parents' charity to monks is nothing compared to my husband's, master. He is a religious man whose lifelong pleasure has been repairing bridges, mending roads, looking after the aged, and helping the poor. When he hears that I have given you this food, he'll love me more warmly than ever." Sanzang still declined to eat it.

Pig was beside himself. Twisting his lips into a pout, he muttered indignantly, "Of all the monks on earth there can't be another as soft in the head as our master. He won't eat ready—cooked food when there are only three of us to share it between. He's waiting for that ape to come back, and then we'll have to split it four ways." Without allowing any more discussion he tipped the pot towards his mouth and was just about to eat.

At just this moment Brother Monkey was somersaulting back with his bowl full of the peaches he had picked on the Southern mountain. When he saw with the golden pupils in his fiery eyes that the girl was an evil spirit, he put the bowl down, lifted his cudgel, and was going to hit her on the head when the horrified Sanzang held him back and said, "Who do you think you're going to hit?"

"That girl in front of you is no good," he replied. "She's an evil spirit trying to make a fool of you."

"In the old days you had a very sharp eye, you ape," Sanzang said, "but this is nonsense. This veritable Bodhisattva is feeding us with the best of motives, so how can you call her an evil spirit?"

"You wouldn't be able to tell, master," said Monkey with a grin. "When I was an evil monster in the Water Curtain Cave I used to do that if I wanted a meal of human flesh. I would turn myself into gold and silver, or a country mansion, or liquor, or a pretty girl. Whoever was fool enough to be besotted with one of these would fall in love with me, and I would lure them into the cave, where I did what I wanted with them. Sometimes I ate them steamed and sometimes boiled, and what I couldn't finish I used to dry in the sun against a rainy day.

If I'd been slower getting here, master, you'd have fallen into her snare and she'd have finished you off." The Tang Priest refused to believe him and maintained that she was a good person.

"I know you, master," said Monkey. "Her pretty face must have made you feel randy. If that's the way you feel, tell Pig to fell a few trees and send Friar Sand look off to for some grass. I'll be the carpenter, and we'll build you a hut here that you and the girl can use as your bridal chamber. We can all go our own ways.

Wouldn't marriage be a worthwhile way of living? Why bother plodding on to fetch some scriptures or other?" Sanzang, who had always been such a soft and virtuous man, was unable to take this. He was so embarrassed that he blushed from his shaven pate to his ears.

While Sanzang was feeling so embarrassed, Monkey flared up again and struck at the evil spirit's face. The fiend, who knew a trick or two, used a magic way of abandoning its body: when it saw Monkey's cudgel coming it braced itself and fled, leaving a false corpse lying dead on the ground.

Sanzang shook with terror and said to himself, "That monkey is utterly outrageous. Despite all my good advice he will kill people for no

reason at all."

"Don't be angry, master," said Monkey. "Come and see what's in her pot." Friar Sand helped Sanzang over to look, and he saw that far from containing tasty rice it was full of centipedes with long tails. The jar had held not wheat – balls but frogs and toads, which were now jumping around on the ground. Sanzang was now beginning to believe Monkey.

This was not enough, however, to prevent a furious Pig from deliberately making trouble by saying, "Master, that girl was a local countrywoman who happened to meet us while she was taking some food to the fields.

There's no reason to think that she was an evil spirit. My elder brother was trying his club out on her, and he killed her by mistake. He's deliberately trying to trick us by magicking the food into those things because he's Chapter 27

afraid you'll recite the Band – tightening spell. He's fooled you into not saying it."

This brought the blindness back on Sanzang, who believed these trouble – making remarks and made the magic with his hand as he recited the spell. "My head's aching, my head's aching," Monkey said. "Stop, please stop.

Tell me off if you like."

"I've nothing to say to you," replied Sanzang. "A man of religion should always help others, and his thoughts should always be virtuous. When sweeping the floor you must be careful not to kill any ants, and to spare the moth you should put gauze round your lamp. Why do you keep murdering people? If you are going to kill innocent people like that there is no point in your going to fetch the scriptures. Go back!"

"Where am I to go back to?" Monkey asked.

"I won't have you as my disciple any longer," said Sanzang.

"If you won't have me as your disciple," Monkey said, "I'm afraid you may never reach the Western Heaven."

"My destiny is in Heaven's hands," replied Sanzang. "If some evil spirit is fated to cook me, he will; and there's no way of getting out of it. But if I'm not to be eaten, will you be able to extend my life? Be off with you at once."

"I'll go if I must," said Monkey, "but I'll never have repaid your kindness to me."

"What kindness have I ever done you?" Sanzang asked.

Monkey knelt down and kowtowed. "When I wrecked the Heavenly Palace," he said, "I put myself in a very dangerous position, and the Buddha crashed me under the Double Boundary Mountain. Luckily the Bodhisattva Guanyin administered the vows to me, and you, master, released me, so if I don't go with you to the Western Heaven I'll look like a 'scoundrel who doesn't return a kindness, with a name that will be cursed for ever.'"

As Sanzang was a compassionate and holy monk this desperate plea from Monkey persuaded him to relent.

"In view of what you say I'll let you off this time, but don't behave so disgracefully again. If you are ever as wicked as that again I shall recite that spell twenty times over."

"Make it thirty if you like," replied Monkey. "I shan't hit anyone else." With that he helped Sanzang mount the horse and offered him some of the peaches he had picked. After eating a few the Tang Priest felt less hungry for the time being.

The evil spirit rose up into the air when it had saved itself from being killed by Monkey's cudgel. Gnashing its teeth in the clouds, it thought of Monkey with silent hatred: "Now I know that those magical powers of his that I've been hearing about for years are real. The Tang Priest didn't realize who I was and would have eaten the food. If he'd so much as leant forward to smell it I could have seized him, and he would have been mine.

But that Monkey turned up, wrecked my plan, and almost killed me with his club. If I spare that monk now I'll have gone to all that trouble for nothing, so I'll have another go at tricking him."

The splendid evil spirit landed its negative cloud, shook itself, and changed into an old woman in her eighties who was weeping as she hobbled along leaning on a bamboo stick with a crooked handle.

"This is terrible, master," exclaimed Pig with horror at the sight of her. "Her mother's come to look for her."

Chapter 27

"For whom?" asked the Tang Priest.

"It must be her daughter that my elder brother killed," said Pig. "This must be the girl's mother looking for her."

"Don't talk nonsense," said Monkey. "That girl was eighteen and this old woman is eighty. How could she possibly have had a child when she was over sixty? She must be a fake. Let me go and take a look." The splendid Monkey hurried over to examine her and saw that the monster had Turned into an old woman

With temples as white as frozen snow.

Slowly she stumbled along the road,

Making her way in fear and trembling.

Her body was weak and emaciated,

Her face like a withered leaf of cabbage.

Her cheekbone was twisted upwards,

While the ends of her lips went down.

How can old age compare with youth?

Her face was as creased as a pleated bag.

Realizing that she was an evil spirit, Monkey did not wait to argue about it, but raised his cudgel and struck at her head. Seeing the blow coining, the spirit braced itself again and extracted its true essence once more. The false corpse sprawled dead beside the path. Sanzang was so horrified that he fell off the horse and lay beside the path, reciting the Band—tightening Spell twenty times over. Poor Monkey's head was squeezed so hard that it looked like a narrow—waisted gourd. The pain was unbearable, and he rolled over towards his master to plead, "Stop, master. Say whatever you like."

"I have nothing to say," Sanzang replied. "If a monk does good he will not fall into hell. Despite all my preaching you still commit murder. How can you? No sooner have you killed one person than you kill another. It's an outrage."

"She was an evil spirit," Monkey replied.

"Nonsense, you ape," said the Tang Priest, "as if there could be so many monsters! You haven't the least intention of reforming, and you are a deliberate murderer. Be off with you."

"Are you sending me away again, master?" Monkey asked. "I'll go if I must, but there's one thing I won't agree to."

"What," Sanzang asked, "would that be?"

"Master," Pig put in, "he wants the baggage divided between you and him. He's been a monk with you for several years, and hasn't succeeded in winning a good reward. You can't let him go away empty – handed.

Better give him a worn – out tunic and a tattered hat from the bundle."

This made Monkey jump with fury. "I'll get you, you long – snouted moron," he said. "I've been a true Buddhist with no trace of covetousness or greed. I certainly don't want a share of the baggage."

"If you're neither covetous nor greedy," said Sanzang, "why won't you go away?"

"To be quite honest with you, master," he replied, "when I lived in the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit and knew all the great heroes, I won the submission of seventy – two other demon kings and had forty – seven thousand minor demons under me. I used to wear a crown of purple gold and a yellow robe with a belt of the finest jade. I had cloud – treading shoes on my feet and held an As – You – Will gold – banded cudgel in my hands. I really was somebody then. But when I attained enlightenment and repented, I shaved my head and took to the Buddhist faith as your disciple. I couldn't face my old friends if I went back with this golden band round my head. So if

you don't want me any longer, master, please say the Band–loosening Spell and I'll take it off and give it back to you. I'll gladly agree to you putting it round someone else's head. As I've been your disciple for so long, surely you can show me this kindness." Sanzang was deeply shocked.

"Monkey," he said, "the Bodhisattva secretly taught me the Band–tightening Spell, but not a band–loosening one."

"In that case you'll have to let me come with you," Monkey replied.

"Get up then," said Sanzang, feeling that he had no option, "I'll let you off again just this once. But you must never commit another murder."

"I never will," said Monkey, "never again." He helped his master mount the horse and led the way forward.

The evil spirit, who had not been killed the second time Monkey hit it either, was full of admiration as it floated in mid–air. "What a splendid Monkey King," it thought, "and what sharp eyes. He saw who I was through both my transformations. Those monks are travelling fast, and once they're over the mountain and fifteen miles to the West they'll be out of my territory. And other fiends and monsters who catch them will be laughing till their mouths split, and I'll be heartbroken with sorrow. I'll have to have another go at tricking them." The excellent evil spirit brought its negative wind down to the mountainside and with one shake turned itself into an old man.

His hair was as white as Ancient Peng's,

His temples as hoary as the Star of Longevity.

Jade rang in his ears,

And his eyes swam with golden stars.

He leant on a dragon–headed stick,

And wore a cloak of crane feathers.

In his hands he fingered prayer–beads

While reciting Buddhist sutras.

When Sanzang saw him from the back of his horse he said with great delight, "Amitabha Buddha! The West is indeed a blessed land. That old man is forcing himself to recite scriptures although he can hardly walk."

"Master," said Pig, "don't be so nice about him. He's going to give us trouble."

"What do you mean?" Sanzang asked.

"My elder brother has killed the daughter and the old woman, and this is the old man coming to look for them.

If we fall into his hands you'll have to pay with your life. It'll be the death penalty for you, and I'll get a long sentence for being your accomplice. Friar Sand will be exiled for giving the orders. That elder brother will disappear by magic, and we three will have to carry the can."

"Don't talk such nonsense, you moron," said Monkey. "You're terrifying the master. Wait while I go and have another look." Hiding the cudgel about his person he went up to the monster and said, "Where are you going, venerable sir? And why are you reciting scriptures as you walk along?"

The monster, failing to recognize his opponent, thought that the Great Sage Monkey was merely a passer—by and said, "Holy sir, my family has lived here for generations, and all my life I have done good deeds, fed monks, read the scriptures, and repeated the Buddha's name. As fate has it I have no son, only a daughter, and she lives at home with her husband. She went off to the fields with food early this morning, and I'm afraid she may have been eaten by a tiger. My wife went out to look for her, and she hasn't come back either. I've no idea what's happened to them, so I've come to search for them. If they have died, I shall just have to gather their bones and take them back for a decent burial."

"I'm a master of disguise," replied Monkey with a grin, "so don't try to pull the wool over my eyes. You can't fool me. I know that you're an evil spirit." The monster was speechless with fright. Monkey brandished his cudgel and thought, "If I don't kill him he'll make a getaway; but if I do, my master will say that spell."

"Yet if I don't kill him," he went on to reflect, "I'll take a lot of thought

and effort to rescue the master when this monster seizes some other chance to carry him off. The best thing is to kill him. If I kill him with the cudgel the master will say the spell, but then 'even a vicious tiger doesn't eat her own cubs'. I'll be able to get round my master with my smooth tongue and some well chosen words." The splendid Great Sage uttered a spell and called out to the local deities and the gods of the mountains, "This evil spirit has tried to trick my master three times, and I'm now going to kill it. I want you to be witnesses in the air around me. Don't leave!"

Hearing this command, the gods all had to obey and watch from the clouds. The Great Sage raised his cudgel and struck down the monster. Now, at last, it was dead.

The Tang Priest was shaking with terror on the back of his horse, unable to speak.

Pig stood beside him and said with a laugh, "That Monkey's marvellous, isn't he! He's gone mad. He's killed three people in a few hours' journey."

The Tang Priest was just going to say the spell when Monkey threw himself in front of his horse and called out, "Don't say it, master, don't say it. Come and have a look at it." It was now just a pile of dusty bones.

"He's only just been killed, Wukong," Sanzang said in astonishment, "so why has he turned into a skeleton?"

"It was a demon corpse with magic powers that used to deceive people and destroy them. Now that I've killed it, it's reverted to its original form. The writing on her backbone says that she's called 'Lady White Bone.'"

Sanzang was convinced, but Pig had to make trouble again.

"Master," he said, "he's afraid that you'll say those words because he killed him with a vicious blow from his cudgel, and so he's made him look like this to fool you." The Tang Priest, who really was gullible, now believed Pig, and he started to recite the spell.

Monkey, unable to stop the pain, knelt beside the path and cried, "Stop, stop. Say whatever it is you have to say,"

"Baboon," said Sanzang, "I have nothing more to say to you. If a monk acts rightly he will grow daily but invisibly, like grass in a garden during the spring, whereas an evildoer will be imperceptibly worn away day by day like a stone. You have killed three people, one after the other, in this wild and desolate place, and there is nobody here to find you out or bring a case against you. But if you go to a city or some other crowded place and start laying about you with that murderous cudgel, we'll be in big trouble and there will be no escape for us. Go back!"

"You're wrong to hold it against me, master," Monkey replied, "as that wretch was obviously an evil monster set on murdering you. But so far from being grateful that I've saved you by killing it, you would have to believe that idiot's tittle–tattle and keep sending me away. As the saying goes, you should never have to do anything more that three times. I'd be a low and shameless creature if I didn't go now. I'll go, I'll go all right, but who will you have left to look after you?"

"Damned ape," Sanzang replied, "you get ruder and ruder. You seem to think that you're the only one. What about Pig and Friar Sand? Aren't they people?"

On hearing him say that Pig and Friar Sand were suitable people too, Monkey was very hurt. "That's a terrible thing to hear, master," he said. "When you left Chang'an, Liu Boqin helped you on your way, and when you reached the Double Boundary Mountain you saved me and I took you as my master. I've gone into ancient caves and deep forests capturing monsters and demons. I won Pig and Friar Sand over, and I've had a very hard time of it. But today you've turned stupid and you're sending me back. 'When the birds have all been shot the bow is put away, and when the rabbits are all killed the hounds are stewed.' Oh well! If only you hadn't got that Band–tightening Spell."

"I won't recite it again," said Sanzang.

"You shouldn't say that," replied Monkey. "If you're ever beset by evil monsters from whom you can't escape, and if Pig and Friar Sand can't save you, then think of me. If it's unbearable, say the spell. My head will ache even if I'm many tens of thousands of miles away. But if I do come back to you, never say it again."

The Tang Priest grew angrier and angrier as Monkey talked on, and

tumbling off his horse he told Friar Sand to take paper and brush from the pack. Then he fetched some water from a stream, rubbed the inkstick on a stone, wrote out a letter of dismissal, and handed it to Monkey.

"Here it is in writing," he said. "I don't want you as my disciple a moment longer. If I ever see you again may I fall into the Avichi Hell."

Monkey quickly took the document and said, "There's no need to swear an oath, master. I'm off." He folded the paper up and put it in his sleeve, then tried once more to mollify Sanzang. "Master," he said, "I've spent some time with you, and I've also been taught by the Bodhisattva. Now I'm being fired in the middle of the journey, when I've achieved nothing. Please sit down and accept my homage, then I won't feel so bad about going."

The Tang Priest turned away and would not look at him, muttering, "I am a good monk, and I won't accept the respects of bad people like you." Seeing that Sanzang was refusing to face him, the Great Sage used magic to give himself extra bodies. He blew a magic breath on three hairs plucked from the back of his head and shouted, "Change!" They turned into three more Monkeys, making a total of four with the real one, and surrounding the master on all four sides they kowtowed to him. Unable to avoid them by dodging to left or right, Sanzang had to accept their respects.

The Great Sage jumped up, shook himself, put the hairs back, and gave Friar Sand these instructions: "You are a good man, my brother, so mind you stop Pig from talking nonsense and be very careful on the journey. If at any time evil spirits capture our master, you tell them that I'm his senior disciple. The hairy devils of the West have heard of my powers and won't dare to harm him."

"I am a good monk," said the Tang Priest, "and I'd never mention the name of a person as bad as you. Go back." As his master refused over and over again to change his mind Monkey had nothing for it but to go.

Look at him:

Holding back his tears he bowed good – bye to his master,

Then sadly but with care he gave instructions to Friar Sand.

His head pushed the hillside grass apart,

His feet kicked the creepers up in the air.

Heaven and earth spun round like a wheel;

At flying over mountains and seas none could beat him.

Within an instant no sign of him could be seen;

He retraced his whole journey in a flash.

Holding back his anger, Monkey left his master and went straight back to the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit on his somersault cloud. He was feeling lonely and miserable when he heard the sound of water. When he looked around from where he was in midair, he realized that it was the waves of the Eastern Sea. The sight of it reminded him of the Tang Priest, and he could not stop the tears from rolling Chapter 27

down his cheeks. He stopped his cloud and stayed there a long time before going. If you don't know what happened when he went, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 28

On the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit the Devils Rise

Sanzang Meets a Monster in the Black Pine Forest

The Great Sage was gazing at the Eastern Ocean, sighing sadly at being driven away by the Tang Priest. "I haven't been this way for five hundred years," he said. As he looked at the sea, Vast were the misty waters,

Boundless the mighty waves.

The vast and misty waters stretched to the Milky Way;

The boundless and mighty waves were linked to the earth's arteries.

The tides came surging,

The waters swirled around.

The surging tides

Roared like the thunder in spring;

The swirling waters

Howled like a summer hurricane.

The blessed ancients riding on dragons

Surely must have frowned as they came and went;

Immortal youths flying on cranes

Certainly felt anxious as they passed above.

There were no villages near the coast,

And scarcely a fishing boat beside the sea.

The waves' crests were like immemorial snows;

The wind made autumn in July.

Chapter 28

Journey to the West

Wild beasts roamed at will,

Shore birds bobbed in the waves.

There was no fisherman in sight,

And the only sound was the screaming of the gulls.

Though the fish were happy at the bottom of the sea,

Anxiety gripped the wild geese overhead.

With a spring Monkey leapt over the Eastern Ocean and was soon back at the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.

As he brought his cloud down and gazed around him, he saw that all the vegetation on the mountain had gone and the mists had disappeared completely. The peaks had collapsed and the woods were shriveled and dead.

Do you know why? It was because when Monkey was taken to the upper world after wrecking the Heavenly Palace, the god Erlang and the Seven Brothers of Meishan had burnt it all down. This made the Great Sage even more miserable than ever. There is a poem in the ancient style about the ruined landscape of the mountain:

I came back to the immortal mountain in tears;

On seeing it, my sorrow is doubled.

I used to think that it was safe from harm,

But now I know that it has been destroyed.

If only Erlang had not defeated me;

Curse you for bullying me like that.

I shall dig up the graves of your ancestors,

And not stop at destroying their tombs.

Gone, gone, the mists that filled the sky;

Scattered the winds and clouds that covered the earth.

On the Eastern ridge the tiger's roar is silent.

The ape's howl no more on the Western mountain.

No sign of hare or fox in the Northern valley;

No shadow of a deer in the Southern ravine.

The blue rock was burnt to a thousand cinders,

The jade – green sands are now just mud.

The lofty pines outside the cave all lean askew;

Few are the cypresses before the cliff.

Cedar, fir, locust, chestnut, juniper, and sandalwood – – all are burnt.

Peach, apricot, plum, pear, and jujube – – gone every one.

How are the silkworms to be fed without oak and mulberry?

The birds cannot nest with no willow or bamboo.

The crags and boulders have been turned to dust,

The springs have dried up, and weeds grow in the stream – beds.

The earth is black in front of the cliff, and no orchids grow.

Creepers crawl in the brown mud by the path.

Where did the birds of yesterday fly?

To what other mountain did the animals go?

Leopards and pythons dislike this ruined spot;

Cranes and snakes avoid the desolation.

My criminal thoughts of those days past

Brought on the disaster of today.

Chapter 28

The Great Sage, deep in gloom, heard a sound from a thorny hollow in front of a grassy slope as seven or eight little monkeys leapt out, rushed up to him, and surrounded him kowtowing. "Great Sage," they shouted,

"have you come home today?"

"Why aren't you playing?" the Handsome Monkey King asked them. "Why were you all hiding? I was here for ages without seeing a sign of you. Why?"

Tears poured from the eyes of the other monkeys as they told him, "Ever since you were taken up to Heaven as a prisoner, Great Sage, the hunters have given us a terrible time. What with their powerful bows and crossbows, their brown falcons and evil hounds, their nets, loops, hooks, and spears, we are all too afraid for our lives to come out and play. We have to hide deep in our caves and keep away from our usual dens. When we're hungry we filch some grass from the hillside, and we drink the fresh spring water from the stream.

We've only just heard you, Great Sage, Your Majesty, and come out to greet you. Please, please help us."

The Great Sage felt more depressed than ever on hearing this, and he went on to ask, "How many of you are there left on this mountain?"

"Only about a thousand of all ages."

"In the old days," said the Great Sage, "I had forty–seven thousand fiends. Where have they all gone now?"

"After you went away the god Erlang set fire to the mountain and most of us were killed in the blaze. Some of us squatted at the bottom of wells, or hid in gullies, or took cover under the iron bridge, and escaped with our lives. When the fire burnt itself out and the smoke cleared we came out to find that there were no more plants or fruit to feed us, making life almost impossible, so half of the survivors went away. The rest of us have been having a very lean time on this mountain, and half of those left have been caught by hunters in the past two years."

"What do they do that for?" Monkey asked.

"We hate the very name 'hunters,'" the other monkeys replied. "They shoot us with arrows, spear us, poison us, and beat us to death. They take us away to skin us and cut the flesh from our bones before boiling us in soy sauce, steaming us with vinegar, frying us in oil, or stir–cooking us with salt. Then they eat us to help their rice down. Those of us who are caught in nets or loops are taken away alive and made to dance in a ring, act, do somersaults, jump around, play drums and gongs in the street, and make fools of themselves in every possible way."

"Who's in charge in the cave?" asked Monkey, now thoroughly angry.

"Marshals Ma and Liu and Generals Ben and Ba," they replied, "are still in command."

"Then tell them that I'm here," said Monkey.

The junior fiends rushed in to report, "His Majesty the Great Sage has come home." As soon as they heard this Ma, Liu, Ben and Ba rushed out to kowtow and welcome him into the cave.

The Great Sage sat in the middle of it, with his fiendish hosts prostrating themselves before him and asking,

"Why have you come back to your mountain instead of going to the West, Your Majesty? We heard recently that you had come back to life and were escorting the Tang Priest to fetch scriptures from the Western Heaven."

"What you don't know, my little ones," said Monkey, "is that Sanzang can't tell a good man when he sees one.

I captured monsters and demons for him all along the way, and I used every one of my magical powers to kill evil spirits for him. But he called me a murderer and wouldn't have me as his disciple any longer. He sent me back here and gave me a letter of dismissal to certify that he'll never employ me again."

All the monkeys clapped their hands for joy. "What luck," they said, "what luck. Now you're home again after being some kind of monk or other, you can be our leader for the next few years."

"Lay on some coconut toddy at once to welcome His Majesty back," someone ordered.

"No," said the Great Sage, "don't let's drink. How often do the hunters come to our mountain?"

"Great Sage," replied Marshals Ma and Liu, "they come here in all seasons and harass us for days on end."

"Then why haven't they come today?" Monkey asked.

"They'll be here soon enough," replied the marshals.

"Little ones," Monkey ordered, "you are all to go out, gather those broken cinders that were burnt brittle in the fire, and pile them up. I want twenty to thirty or fifty to sixty in a pile. I have a use for them." Like a swarm of bees the little monkeys rushed around making piles all over the place. When Monkey saw them he said, "Go and hide in the cave, little ones, while I do some magic."

When the Great Sage went up to the mountain peak to look around he saw over a thousand men with horses approaching from the South. They were beating drums and gongs, and they all had falcons, hounds, swords or spears. Examining them closely the Monkey King saw that they were most menacing— —fine lads and brave ones:

With fox skins over their shoulders,

And brocade covering their chests.

Their quivers were full of wolf—fanged arrows,

And carved bows hung by their legs.

The men were like tigers that comb the hills,

The horses like ravine—leaping dragons.

They came in hordes, leading their hounds,

And their arms were packed with falcons.

In thornwood baskets they carried muskets,

And powerful eagles were fastened to their belts.

They had sticky poles by the hundred

And hare forks by the thousand.

Bull – headed fiends blocked the paths with nets,

Demon kings were handling knotted ropes.

As they all roared their ferocious cries

They swarmed over the hill like the stars in the sky.

The Great Sage was furious at the sight of them spreading all over his mountain. He made a spell with his fist, muttered the words that went with it, breathed in a mouthful of air from the quarter that the winds came from, and puffed it out again. It was now a hurricane, a splendid hurricane, Picking up the dust and earth,

Blowing down trees and whole forests.

Waves reared up as high as mountains,

As they beat in thousands upon the shore.

Heaven and Earth were thrown into gloom,

Sun and moon cast into darkness.

One gust shook the pines with a tiger's roar,

Howling like a dragon as it rushed through the bamboos.

Heaven belched angrily through all its orifices,

As flying dirt and stones brought injury and death.

The hurricane that the Great Sage had called up made the piles of broken stone whirl wildly around, and the thousand men with their horses were reduced to a pathetic state.

The aconite was smashed to pieces by the stones,

While the flying dirt injured all the sea horses.

Ginseng and cassia were in panic by the ridge,

And blood stained the cinnabar ground.

The aconite was stranded away from home,

The betel—nut could not return to its own town.

Corpses lay scattered like powder on the mountainside

Leaving the red lady waiting anxiously at home.

As another poem says,

With men and horses all dead, they could not go back——

Ghosts and lonely spirits in terrible confusion.

Alas that the martial and heroic generals

Should bleed in the sand for trusting fools.

Bringing his cloud down, the Great Sage clapped his hands and laughed aloud. "What luck," he said, "what luck. Ever since I submitted to the Tang Priest and became a monk, he was always telling me 'if you do good for a thousand days you still won't have done enough, but if you do ill for one day that will be too much.' How true it was. I killed a few evil spirits when I was with him and he regarded me as a murderer; and now I've come home I've wiped out all these hunters."

"Come out, little ones," he shouted, and now that the hurricane was over and the Great Sage had called them, the monkeys came bounding out one after the other. "Go and strip the clothes off the dead hunters at the foot of the Southern mountain," he said, "bring them back here, and wash the bloodstains out. Then you can wear them to keep warm. Push all the corpses into the pool that's ten thousand fathoms deep, and when you've dragged all the dead horses here, strip off their hides to make into boots, and pickle their flesh——it'll feed us for a long time. I'll give you all those bows, arrows, spears and swords for you to practice your military skills with. And bring me back all those many coloured flags and banners for us to use." The monkeys all accepted his orders.

The Great Sage had the banners unstitched and washed, then put them all together as one multicolored banner which bore the legend, Great Sage Equaling Heaven, Restorer of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, Recreator of the Water Curtain Cave. They hung the banner from a pole outside the cave, and for days on end he invited demons and held

gatherings of the wild beasts. He accumulated provisions, and the word "monk"

was never mentioned. As he was so generous and his powers so great he was able to go and borrow some sweet magic waters from the dragon kings of the four seas with which to bathe the mountain and make it green again. In front of it he planted elms and willows, and behind it pines and cedars; he also put in peaches, greengages, jujubes, and plums. Thus he led a happy and carefree life.

Let us return to the Tang Priest, who had trusted the word of crafty Nature and dismissed the Mind Ape. He climbed into his saddle, and with Pig leading the way and Friar Sand carrying the luggage they carried on Westwards. After crossing the White Tiger Ridge they saw a range of forested hills of which it could truthfully be said that creepers climbed and twisted among the bluish cypresses and green pines.

"Disciples," said Sanzang, "this rough mountain path is very hard going, and we must be careful in the dense pine forests ahead as I'm afraid there may be evil spirits and monsters." At this the idiot Pig summoned up his spirits and, telling Friar Sand to guide the horse, cleared a path with his rake along which he led the Tang Priest into the forest. As they were going along, the venerable Sanzang reined in his horse and said to Pig,

"I'm really starving today. Is there anywhere you could find some food for me?"

"Please dismount, master," Pig replied, "and wait here while I go and find some." Sanzang dismounted, while Friar Sand put down his load, took out his begging bowl, and handed it to Pig. "I'm off," said Pig, and when asked by Sanzang where he was going he replied, "Don't let that bother you. I'll beg you some food even if it's like cutting through ice to get fire, or even if it means squeezing oil out of snow."

He traveled West about four miles from the pine forest without meeting anybody. It was indeed a lonely place inhabited only by wolves and tigers. The idiot found the going heavy, and he muttered to himself, "When Monkey was with us the old priest could have anything he wanted, but now I have to do it all. How true it is that

'you have to keep house to realize how expensive rice and firewood are, and raise sons to understand parental love'. There's nowhere at all to beg on this road." By now he felt sleepy after all this walking and he thought, "If I go back now and tell the old monk that there's nowhere I can beg food, he may not believe I've come this far. I'd better hang around here for another hour or two before reporting back. Oh well, I may as well take a snooze in that grass." With that the idiot pillowed his head in the grass and went to sleep. He had only meant to take forty winks and then get up again, not realizing that he was so exhausted by the journey that he would be sound asleep as soon as his head was down.

Let us leave Pig asleep there and return to Sanzang in the forest. As he was feeling anxious and unsettled he said to Friar Sand, "It's late now. Why isn't Pig back from begging for food?"

"Master," said Friar Sand, "you still don't understand him. He's found out that many of these Westerners give food to monks, and with his big belly he won't be bothering about you. He won't be back till he's eaten his fill."

"True," said Sanzang. "If he's greedily stuffing himself somewhere far away we needn't concern ourselves with him. It's getting late and this is no place to spend the night. We must find somewhere to stay."

"There's no rush, master," said Friar Sand. "You sit and wait here while I go and find him."

"Very well," said Sanzang, "very well. Never mind about the food. It's somewhere for the night that matters."

Clasping his precious staff, Friar Sand went off through the pine forest in search of Pig.

Chapter 28

Sanzang felt thoroughly tired and miserable as he sat alone in the forest, so he summoned up his spirits, leapt to his feet, hid all the luggage in a cache, tethered the horse to a tree, took off his reed hat, and drove his staff into the ground. Then he straightened out his black robes and took a leisurely stroll among the trees to cheer himself up. As he looked at all the wild flowers he did not hear the calls of the

birds returning to their nests.

The grass was deep and the forest paths were narrow, and in his distraction he lost his way. He had started out to cheer himself up and also to find Pig and Friar Sand; what he did not realize was that they had headed due West while he, after wandering in all directions, was going South. He came out of the forest and looked up to see a dazzling golden light. On closer examination he saw that it was the golden roof of a pagoda whose gleaming in the setting sun. "What a sad destiny my disciples have," he thought. "When I left the land of the East, I vowed that I would burn incense in every temple I passed, would worship every Buddha statue I saw, and sweep up every pagoda I encountered. Isn't that a golden pagoda gleaming over there? Why didn't we go that way? There's bound to be a monastery at the foot of the pagoda, and the monastery must surely contain monks. Let me have a look. The luggage and the white horse can come to no harm in that uninhabited spot. If there is some suitable place we can all spend the night here when my disciples come back."

Alas! The venerable Sanzang was once more the victim of delusion. He strode over to the pagoda, and what he saw was

A cliff ten thousand fathoms high,

A lofty mountain reaching to the firmament.

Its roots sunk deep into the earth,

Its peak thrust up into the sky.

On either side were trees by the thousand,

While creepers stretched many miles around.

The wind made shadows as it bent the tips of the flowers;

The moon had no root where the waters flowed under the clouds.

A fallen tree spanned a deep ravine,

Withered creepers were knotted round the gleaming peak.

Under the stone bridge,

Ran the water from a spring;

On the sacred altar

The ever – burning lamp was as bright as chalk.

From a distance it looked like the Three Islands of Paradise;

Close to, it resembled the blessed land of Penglai.

Chapter 28

Fragrant pine and purple bamboo grew round the mountain brooks,
Magpies, monkeys, crows, and apes roamed the lofty ridge.

Outside the door of a cave

Animals came and went in orderly groups.

Among the trees

Flocks of birds were briefly seen.

Luxuriant grew the green and scented herbs,

As the wild flowers bloomed in all their glory.

This was clearly an evil place

That the deluded priest approached,

Sanzang stepped out and was soon at the gate of the pagoda. Seeing a curtain of speckled bamboo hanging inside, he lifted it up and went in. He raised his head and saw an evil monster sleeping on a stone bed. Do you know what he looked like?

A dark blue face,

White fangs,

A huge gaping mouth.

On either side of it were matted hairs

All stained with fat and grease.

The purple tufts of his beard and moustache

Made one think of splayed – out lichee shoots.

His nose was as hooked as a parrot's beak

His eyes as dim as stars in the dawn.

His two fists

Were the size of a monk's begging bowl;

His indigo – blue feet

Were like a pair of logs.

The pale yellow robe that was flung across him

Was grander than a brocade cassock.

The sword in his hand

Gleamed and flashed;

The rock on which he slept

Was exquisite, smooth and flawless.

As a little fiend he had marshaled ant formations,

When a senior demon he had sat in the wasps' headquarters.

At the sight of his awe – inspiring might

All would shout out,

Calling him master.

He had created three men drinking in the moonlight,

And had magicked out of the wind cups of refreshing tea.

Consider his tremendous supernatural powers – –

In the wink of an eyelid

He could be at the ends of the earth.

In wild forests he could sing like a bird;

Deep in the bush he would stay with snakes and tigers.

When an Immortal farms the land it bears white jade;

When a Taoist master tends the fire he produces elixir.

Although this little cave－mouth

Did not lead to the Avichi Hell,

Yet this ferocious monster

Was a bull－headed demon.

Chapter 28

Sanzang was so terrified at the sight of him that he shrank back, his whole body numb with terror. No sooner had he turned to go than the monster, whose powers really were tremendous, opened a fiendish eye with a golden pupil and shouted, "Who is that outside the door, little ones?"

A junior devil poked his head out to look, saw a shaven－headed priest, and ran in to report, "A monk, Your Majesty. He has a large face and a round head, and his ears hang down to his shoulders. His flesh looks most tender and his skin extremely delicate. He's a very promising monk."

The monster cackled and said, "This is what they call 'a fly landing on a snake's head, or food and clothing presenting themselves to you'. Go and catch him for me, lads, and bring him back here. I'll reward you well."

The junior demons rushed out after Sanzang like a swarm of bees; and Sanzang, in his alarm, started to run so fast he seemed to fly. But he was so terrified that his legs were soon like numb jelly, and on top of this the path was very uneven and it was twilight in the deep forest.

He could not move fast enough, and the junior demons picked him up and carried him back.

A dragon in shallows falls victim to shrimps;

A tiger on the plain can be put upon by dogs.

Although good deeds always run into trouble,

The Tang Priest on his Westward journey has been most unlucky.

The junior devils carried the Tang Priest as far as the bamboo curtain and put him down outside it as they announced with great delight, "We've brought the monk back, Your Majesty." The old demon stole a look and saw that Sanzang, who was holding his head high with dignity, must be a fine monk.

"So fine a monk," he thought, "must be a superior person, so I mustn't treat him as a nobody. If I don't overawe him he won't submit to me." Like a fox pretending to be as awe—inspiring as a tiger, he made his red whiskers bristle, his bloody hair stand on end, and his eyeballs bulge in a glare. "Bring that monk in," he roared.

"Yes sir," the other fiends shouted in chorus, pushing Sanzang inside. As the saying goes, "You have to bow your head under low eaves," and Sanzang was obliged to put his hands together and greet him.

"Where do you live, monk?" the monster asked. "Where have you come from, and where are you going? Tell me at once."

"I am a priest from the Tang country, and I am going to the West on the command of His Majesty the Tang Emperor to ask for holy scriptures. As I was passing your distinguished mountain, I came over to visit the holy men of this pagoda. I did not realize that I would disturb Your Excellency, and I beg you to forgive me.

When I return East with the scriptures from the West I shall see to it that your fame will be eternally celebrated."

"I thought you must be someone from a superior country," said the fiend, bellowing with laughter, "and as that's who you are, I'm going to eat you up. It was splendid of you to come, splendid— —otherwise we might have let you slip. You were fated to be the food in my mouth, so of course you came rushing here. We'll never Chapter 28

let you go; and you'll never escape." Then he ordered the junior demons to tie him up. They rushed upon him and bound him tight to a soul – fixing stake.

Holding his sword in his hands, the old fiend asked, "How many of you are there altogether? You wouldn't have the guts to go to the Western Heaven all by yourself." Eyeing the sword in his hand, Sanzang had to answer truthfully.

"I have two disciples, Your Majesty," he said, "called Pig and Friar Sand. They have both gone begging for food outside the pine forest. Apart from them there is a load of baggage and a white horse that I left in the wood."

"More luck!" said the fiend. "Two disciples as well makes three of you, four counting the horse, which is enough for a meal."

"We'll go and get 'em," the junior fiends said.

"No," the old monster said, "don't go. Lock the front gate. As they've gone begging for food they'll have to find their master for him to eat it, and when they can't find him they're bound to come searching for him here.

As the saying goes, 'it's easiest to do business at home.' Just wait and we'll catch them all in good time." The junior demons shut the front gate.

We will leave the unlucky Sanzang and return to Friar Sand, who was now three or four miles outside the forest in his search for Pig but had not yet seen any village. As he stood on a hillock looking around him, he heard a voice in the undergrowth; and sweeping the tall grass aside with his staff, he discovered the idiot talking in his sleep. Pig woke up when Friar Sand twisted his ear. "You idiot," said Friar Sand, "who said you could sleep here instead of begging for food as our master told you?"

Pig, waking up with a start, asked, "What's the time, brother?"

"Get up at once," replied Friar Sand. "The master told us two to find somewhere to stay whether we can beg any food or not."

Holding his begging bowl and his rake, the drowsy Pig headed straight back with Friar Sand, and when they looked for their master in the

wood they could not see him. "It's all because you didn't come back from begging for food, you idiot," said Friar Sand indignantly. "Master must have been carried off by an evil spirit."

"Don't talk nonsense, brother," replied a grinning Pig. "This forest is a very proper sort of place and couldn't possibly have any evil spirits in it. I expect the old monk got bored sitting here and went off somewhere to look around. Let's go and find him." They took the horse's bridle, picked up the shoulder–pole with the luggage, collected Sanzang's hat and staff, and left the pine wood in search of their master.

But Sanzang was not fated to die this time. When the two had been looking for him without success for a while, they saw a shimmering golden light due South of them. "Blessed indeed are the blessed, brother;" said Pig. "Look where the master must be staying. That light is coming from a pagoda, and they would be bound to look after him well. I expect they've laid on a meal and are making him stay to eat it. Let's get a move on and have some of it ourselves."

"It certainly can't be anything sinister," replied Friar Sand. "We must go and have a look."

Chapter 28

As the pair of them arrived at the gates they found them closed. Above the gates they saw a horizontal tablet of white jade on which were carved the words MOON WATERS CAVE, BOWL MOUNTAIN.

"Brother," said Friar Sand, "this is no temple. It's an evil spirit's cave. If our master is in there we'll never see him."

"Never fear," replied Pig. "Tether the horse and mind the luggage while I ask for news of him." With that the idiot raised his rake and shouted at the top of his voice. "Open up, open up." The junior devil who was on gate duty opened the gates, and at the sight of the pair of them he rushed inside to report, "Your Majesty, we're in business."

"What sort of business?" the old monster asked.

"There are two monks outside the gates," the junior demon replied. "One has a long snout and big ears and the other looks down on his

luck, and they are shouting at us to open up."

"That means Pig and Friar Sand have come looking for him," said the old monster. "Ha! They were bound to.

What brought them here? They look stupid, but I'd better treat them with respect." He called for his armor to be put on him, and when the junior demons had brought it and fastened it on, he took his sword in his hand and marched straight out of the cave.

When Pig and Friar Sand, who were waiting outside, saw the ferocious demon come out this is what he looked like:

A blue face, a red beard, and scarlet hair blowing free;

Golden armor dazzling bright.

Around his waist was a belt of cowries,

And his armor was strapped to his chest with cloud–walking cords.

As he stood before the mountain the wind roared;

Mighty were the waves when he roamed across the seas.

A pair of indigo, muscled hands

Held a soul–chasing, life–snatching sword.

If you want to know this creature's name,

Address him as Yellow Robe.

As the old monster Yellow Robe came out through the gates he asked, "Where are you monks from, and why are you yelling at my gates?"

"Don't you recognize me, son?" said Pig. "I'm your father. I've been sent by the Great Tang on a mission to the Western Heaven. My master is Sanzang, the Emperor's younger brother. If he's here, send him out at once and save me the trouble of having to smash my way in with this rake."

"Yes indeed," laughed the monster, "there is a Tang Priest in my place. I haven't showed him any discourtesy, and I've laid on a meal of human flesh dumplings for him. Why don't you two come in and have some?"

The idiot would have gone in quite trustingly if Friar Sand had not held him back and said, "He's luring you in, brother. Besides, when have you ever eaten human flesh?" The idiot saw the light as last, and he struck at the evil monster's face with his rake. The monster sidestepped and parried with his steel sword. They both showed their magic powers as they leapt up on clouds to continue the fight in mid－air. Friar Sand abandoned the baggage and the white horse and rushed to Pig's aid. It was a fine battle up in the clouds between the two wolfish monks and the evil monster:

When the staff was raised it was met by the sword;

The same sword parried the rake's blow.

One devil general displaying his prowess,

A pair of monkish gods revealing their transformations.

The nine－pronged rake was quite magnificent;

The demon－submitting staff was truly terrifying.

They came from before and behind, from left and right,

But Yellow Robe was calm and unafraid.

See how his blade of tempered steel shines like silver;

Great indeed were his magical powers.

Their fighting filled the sky

With mists and clouds;

Amid the mountains

Cliffs crashed and fell.

One was fighting for fame

So how could he stop?

The others, fighting for their master,

Were completely unafraid.

Chapter 28

408

Journey to the West

The three of them fought dozens of rounds in mid – air without issue. They were all fighting for their very lives, and nothing could have kept them apart.

If you don't know how they saved the Tang Priest, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 29

Sanzang, Delivered, Crosses a Border

A Grateful Pig Tours Mountains and Forests

A poem says

If wild thoughts are not firmly suppressed

There is no point in seeking for the Truth;

If you wish to cultivate your nature before the Buddha,

Why stay halfway between awakening and confusion?

Once awakened you can achieve the Right in an instant;

The confused will drift for ten thousand aeons.

If you can invoke the Buddha and cultivate the Truth,

Sins countless as the Ganges sands can be wiped out.

Pig and Friar Sand had fought thirty inconclusive rounds with the monster. Do you know why they were inconclusive? As far as skill went not even twenty monks, let alone two, would have been a match for that evil I spirit. Yet because the Tang Priest was not fated to die he was being secretly protected by Dharma – guarding deities. There were also the Six 9" Dings, the Six Jias, the Revealers of the Truth of

the Five Regions, the Four Duty Gods, and the Eighteen Defenders of the Faith helping Pig and Friar Sand in mid–air.

We must leave the three of them locked in struggle and return to Sanzang sobbing his heart out in the cave and speculating about his disciples. "I wonder if you have met a benefactor in a village somewhere, Pig," he thought, tears streaming down his face, "and have been overcome by your greed for the offerings. Wherever are you looking for him, Friar Sand? Will you find him? Little do you know of my sufferings at the hands of this fiend I have run into. When will I see you again and be delivered from my troubles so that we can hurry to the Vulture Peak?" As he fretted and wailed he saw a woman come out from the innermost part of the cave.

"Venerable father," she said, leaning on the soul–fixing stake, "where have you come from? Why has he tied Chapter 29

you here?" When Sanzang heard this he sneaked a quick look at her through his tears and observed that she was about thirty. "Don't ask me that, Bodhisattva," he said, "I was fated to die: I walked into your home. Eat me if you must, but don't ask me why."

"I don't eat people," she replied. "My home is over a hundred miles West of here in the city called Elephantia.

I'm the third daughter of the king, and my childhood name was Prettier–than–a–flower. Thirteen years ago, on the fifteenth night of the eighth month, that evil monster came and snatched me away in a whirlwind while we were out enjoying the full moon. I have been his wife all these thirteen years and borne him sons and daughters, but I've never been able to send any message home. I miss my parents, and I can never see them.

Where did you come from to be caught by him?"

"I was sent to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures," replied Sanzang. "I never realized when I set out for a stroll that I would stumble into this. Now he's going to capture my two disciples and steam us all together, then eat us."

"Don't worry, venerable sir," said the princess with a smile. "As you are going to fetch scriptures I can save you. Elephantia lies on the main

route to the West, and if you will take this letter to my parents for me, I'll make him spare your life."

"If you save my wretched life, Bodhisattva," said Sanzang with a bow, "I promise to be your messenger."

The princess hurried back inside, wrote a letter to her family, sealed it, released Sanzang from the stake, and handed him the letter. "Bodhisattva," he said, taking the letter now that he was free, "I am very grateful to you for saving my life. When I reach your country I shall give this to the King. My only worry is that after all these years your parents may not believe that the letter is from you, and what would I do then? I couldn't have them thinking that I was trying to deceive them."

"That's no problem. My father has only us three daughters and no sons. If they see this letter they'll feel that they're seeing me." Tucking the letter securely into his sleeve, he took his leave of the princess, and was on the point of going out when she pulled him back and said, "You won't be able to get out through the front gate. All those big and little monsters are outside the gates waving banners, shouting war—cries, and beating drums and gongs to help the monster king in his battle with your two disciples. You'd better go out the back way. If the monster king catches you he'll interrogate you under torture, and if the junior fiends grab you they'll kill you without a qualm. I'll go to see him and talk him over. If he's prepared to let you go, your disciples can ask his permission for all three of you to go together." Sanzang kowtowed and, as she had told him, left her, slipped out through the back door, and hid among the thorns rather than travel alone.

The princess, who had thought out a clever plan, hurried out through the front gates and made her way through the hosts of demons great and small to hear the furious clash of arms. Pig and Friar Sand were still fighting with the monster in mid—air. "Lord Yellow Robe," she shouted at the top of her voice, and as soon as he heard her the demon king left Pig and Friar Sand, landed his cloud, and grasping his steel sword, took his wife by the arm.

"What is it, wife?" he asked.

"I was lying in bed asleep just now, husband," she replied, "and I dreamt that I saw a god in golden armor."

"What sort of god in golden armor?" he asked. "Why did he come

here?"

"When I was a child in the palace," she said, "I made a secret vow that if I married a good husband I would climb holy mountains, visit Immortals, and give alms to monks. I have now been happily married to you for Chapter 29

thirteen years without ever mentioning the vow before, and the god in golden armor came to make me fulfil it.

His shouting made me wake up, and then I realized it was a dream. I tidied myself up and came straight to tell you about it. To my surprise I found a monk tied to the stake. I beg you, lord and master, to respect my vow and spare that monk in your mercy. This will count as feeding monks and will fulfil my vow. Will you do this?"

"What a fusser you are, wife," he replied. "Nothing to it. If I want to eat people I can easily catch a few more.

If that's how things stand, let the monk go."

"Please may he be released through the back door, husband?"

"What a thing to bother me with. Let him go, and I don't care whether it's by the front way or the back way."

The monster then grasped his sword once more and shouted, "Come here, Pig. I'm not afraid of you, but I'm not fighting you any longer. For my wife's sake I've spared your master, so hurry round and find him at the back door and carry on West. If you set foot in my territory again I won't let you off a second time."

This news made Pig and Friar Sand feel as if they had been let out through the gates of Hell. They scurried away with the horse and the baggage, and going round to the other end of the Moon Waters Cave they called

"Master" outside the back entrance. Sanzang recognized their voices and called back from among the thorn bushes. Friar Sand made his way through the undergrowth, helped his master out, and hurriedly helped him mount the horse.

When he was threatened by the terrible blue – faced monster

He was lucky to meet the devout princess.

Escaping from the golden hook, the turtle

Swam off through the waves with a flick of his tail.

With Pig leading and Friar Sand bringing up the rear, they left the pine forest and traveled along the main track. The two disciples grumbled and complained, while Sanzang tried to conciliate them. Every evening they would find lodgings, and they would be up again at cock – crow. They covered stage after stage of their journey, sometimes longer and sometimes shorter, and before they realized it they had done ninety – nine miles. Suddenly they looked up and there was a fine city in front of them. This was Elephantia, and it was a splendid place:

Distant clouds,

A long road;

Although this was a distant land,

The scenery was as fine as home.

Chapter 29

411

Journey to the West

Auspicious mists enshrouded the city;

Fresh breezes were blowing under the clear moon.

Towering mountains, seen from afar,

Were spread out like a picture.

Rivers flowed rippling,

Like streams of crushed jasper.

There were fields upon fields of farmland

Where new crops sprouted close together.

A handful of fishermen worked three stretches of water,

A wood – gatherer carried twigs from a couple of hills.

The outer wall

And the inner wall of the city,

Were rock – solid.

The houses

And homes

Vied in elegance.

Nine – storied pavilions were like palaces,

High towers like imperial columns.

There was a Hall of the Great Ultimate,

A Flowery Canopied Hall,

A Hall of Incense,

A Hall of Literary Perusal,

A Hall of Government Proclaimed,

A Hall of Splendor Extended,

All with steps of jade and gold

Where civil and military officers stood in their ranks.

Chapter 29

412

Journey to the West

There was also a Great Brightness Palace,

A Palace of Shining Radiance,

A Palace of Eternal Joy,

A Palace of Illustrious Purity,

A Palace of Established Enlightenment,

A Palace of Inexhaustible Glory.

In every palace were gongs, drums, pipes and flutes,

Lamenting the sorrows of spring and the harem's woes.

Then there were imperial parks

Where dew bathed the flowers' tender petals;

And royal canals

Where willows bent their slender waists in the wind.

On the highways

Were belted gentlemen in official hats,

Attired in all their splendor

As they rode in five–horsed chariots;

In remote corners

Were archers with bows and arrows

Whose shots split the clouds apart

And skewered pairs of hawks.

What with the willow–lined streets,

And the houses full of music,

This spring scene rivaled the Luoyang Bridge.

The pilgrim who was seeking the sutras

Was torn with nostalgia for the Great Tang;

The disciples accompanying their master

In a rest－house found happiness in their dream.

Gazing at the view of Elephantia the master and his two disciples dealt with the luggage and the horse and settled down in a rest －house.

The Tang Priest went on foot to the palace gates, where he said to the High Custodian of the gate, "I beg you to report that there is a monk from the Tang Court who has come for a personal audience with His Majesty and has a letter of credentials."

A eunuch messenger hurried to the white jade steps and announced, "Your Majesty, a distinguished priest from the Tang Court has come for an audience as he has a letter of credentials to deliver." The king was delighted to hear that he was from the mighty land of Tang and was himself a venerable and holy monk, so he gave his approval at once with the words, "Call him in."

Sanzang was summoned to the golden steps, where he danced in obeisance and called out the correct greeting.

On either side the many civil and military officers all sighed with admiration and said, "What impressive music and ritual this gentleman from that distinguished country has."

"Venerable sir, why have you come to my country?" the king asked.

"I am a Buddhist from the land of Tang," Sanzang replied, "and I am going to the Western Heaven on the Emperor's orders to fetch the scriptures. I am carrying a letter of credentials, and now that I have arrived in Your Majesty's country it seems proper to hand it to you. Not knowing whether to advance or retreat, I must apologize for disturbing the Dragon Countenance."

"If you have Tang credentials," the king replied, "bring them here for me to see." Sanzang handed the letter up respectfully with both hands and unfolded it on the king's table. It read: From the Tang Emperor of the Great Tang Kingdom, who reigns by order of Heaven, in the Southern Continent of Jambudvipa.

Despite our feeble virtues we have succeeded to the throne, and in worshipping the gods and ruling the people we are as careful morning

and night as if we were on the edge of a precipice or treading on thin ice. Because we failed to save the Dragon King of the Jing River, punishment was visited on our august self; our souls were rushed to the underworld and we became a guest in the land of death. As our lifespan was not yet over, the Lord of Darkness sent us back to the world of the living. We held a Great Assembly of monks and built a holy altar where the souls of the dead could be brought over to the other side. To our great gratitude the Bodhisattva Guanyin, the deliverer from suffering, appeared in person and told us that there is a Buddha in the West who has scriptures that will save the lost and bring lonely souls who have nobody to help them over to the other side. We have therefore especially commissioned the Patriarch Xuanzang to make the long journey across countless mountains to seek for the scriptures and psalms. Should he come to any countries in the West we hope that on seeing this letter they will allow him to go on his way and not impede this predestined good deed. This is addressed to whom it may concern. Given by His Imperial Majesty on an auspicious day in the autumn of the thirteenth year of *Then Guan* of the Great Tang.

Chapter 29

When he had read this letter, which bore nine imperial seals, the king sealed it with his great seal and handed it back to Sanzang, who thanked him as he took it. "Not only did I have a letter of credentials to present," he reported, "I have also brought a family letter to deliver to Your Majesty." The king was delighted and asked what it was. "I happened to meet Your Majesty's third princess, who was carried off by the Yellow－Robed Monster of the Moon Waters Cave in the Bowl Mountain, and she gave me this letter to deliver to you." Tears poured from the king's eyes at the news, and he said, "It is thirteen years since I saw her last, and I don't know how many military and civil officers I can have dismissed or degraded, and how many of the ladies－in －waiting, serving maids, and eunuchs I have had beaten to death since then. I imagined that she had wandered out of the palace and lost her way, and I looked for her everywhere. Even when all the ordinary citizens were interrogated I could find no news of her whereabouts. I never thought that an evil monster could have carried her off. Hearing this all of a sudden makes me weep for sorrow." Sanzang produced the letter from his sleeve and handed it to the king, who on seeing the words, "All is well" on the outside felt so weak in

his hands that he could not open it. He ordered a Grand Scholar from the Academy of Letters to climb the steps of the throne and read it aloud. As the Grand Scholar climbed the steps of the throne, the civil and military officials in front of the throne room and the empresses, royal consorts, and palace ladies behind it all listened intently. The Grand Scholar opened it and read aloud: Your unworthy daughter Prettier—than—a—flower kowtows one hundred times to His Most Excellent Majesty the King her father in the Dragon and Phoenix Palace, to her Majesty the Queen her mother outside the Palace of Shining Radiance, and to all the noble ministers and generals of the court; it is my pleasure to send news to you and thank you for the infinite trouble you have taken on my behalf. But I am unable to devote myself to cheering Your Majesty and carry out my filial duties to the full.

Thirteen years ago, on the festive fifteenth night of the eighth month, when banquets were being given in all the palaces in accordance with Your Majesty's benevolent command, we were enjoying the moonlight and the clear stars. In the middle of our rejoicing a sudden gust of fragrant wind blew up, and from it emerged a demon king with golden pupils, a blue face, and green hair, who seized your daughter and carried her away on a magic cloud to a desolate mountain far from human habitation. There was no way I could stop him forcing me to be his wife, and I have had to endure this for thirteen years. I have borne him two fiendish sons, and they are both complete monsters. I would not have written to you and sullied you with the news of my uncivilized and disgraceful experiences, but I was afraid that after my death nobody would know what had happened to me. Just as I was missing my parents and angry about my fate, a Tang monk also happened to be captured by the monster, so with tears in my eyes I am boldly writing this letter and sending it to you as a token of my feelings. I beg you, Majesty, to take pity on me and send a general to the Moon Waters Cave in Bowl Mountain to capture the Yellow-robed Monster, rescue me, and take me back to the palace, this would make me profoundly grateful. Please excuse the hasty and disrespectful tone of this letter.

With more kowtows,

Your disobedient daughter,

Prettier—than—a—flower.

When the Grand Scholar had read it through, the king wept aloud, the ladies of the palace were all in tears, and the officials were all

saddened. Everyone was miserable.

Chapter 29

After weeping for a long time the king asked the civil and military officials which of them would lead troops to capture the monster and rescue Princess Prettier—than—a—flower for him. He asked them all several times, but nobody would accept, the generals looked as though they were carved out of wood, and the officials might have been molded from clay.

The king was highly agitated, and floods of tears were pouring down his face when the civil and military officials all prostrated themselves before him and said, "Please don't be so disturbed, Your Majesty. The princess has been lost for thirteen years now without anything being heard of her, so we cannot yet know whether she really met this Tang priest and sent a letter by him. Besides, we are all mere mortals, and the military manuals and books of strategy we have studied only cover the deployment of soldiers in battle, making encampments, and what else is necessary to protect the country from the disaster of invasion. That evil spirit travels by cloud and mist, and we would never even be able to catch sight of him, let alone capture him and rescue the Princess. Now that Easterner who is going to fetch scriptures is a holy priest from a great country. This monk must have demon—subduing powers as his 'high qualities overawe the dragons and tigers, and his great virtues give him power over devils and gods.'

"As the old saying goes, 'The man who comes to argue about rights and wrongs is usually the wrongdoer himself.' Far and away the best plan would be to ask this venerable gentleman to subdue the fiend and rescue the princess."

"If you have any supernatural skills, venerable sir," the king said, turning at once to Sanzang, "then use your dharma powers to capture this evil monster and bring my daughter back to the palace. If you do that there will be no need to travel to the West and visit the Buddha. You can let your hair grow and I will make you my brother. We shall sit together on the dragon throne and share my wealth and honour. What about it?"

"My only humble skill," Sanzang hastened to reply, "lies in invoking the Buddha's name, and I really cannot subdue fiends."

"If you can't subdue fiends," the king retorted, "how can you have the courage to go to visit the Buddha in the Western Heaven?"

Sanzang now told him about the two disciples as he could not keep them a secret any longer. "Your Majesty,"

he said, "I could scarcely have come this far by myself. I have two disciples, both skilled at finding ways across mountains and at bridging rivers, who have escorted me here."

"You have behaved disgracefully, monk," said the king angrily. "As you have disciples, you should have brought them with you to see me. Even if we could have offered them no presents they would have liked, they would at least have been given a meal."

"My disciples are so hideous," Sanzang replied, "that I dared not bring them to court for fear of offending Your Majesty's dignity."

"What a monkish thing to say," observed the king with a smile. "You don't really think I would be afraid of them, do you?"

"Oh, no," said Sanzang. "The surname of the older one is Pig; his personal names are Wuneng, Awakened to Power, and Bajie, Eight Prohibitions. He has a long snout, vicious fangs, bristles of steel and ears as big as fans. He is so heftily built that he makes a breeze as he walks. The surname of the second disciple is Sand, and his Buddhist name is Monk Awakened to Purity. He is twelve feet tall, and his arms are four feet thick. His face is the color of indigo, and his mouth is like a bowl of blood. His eyes burn and flash, and his teeth are like rows of nails. It was because they both look so terrible that I did not dare bring them with me."

"Even after you have told me about them," said the king, "I know that I have nothing to fear. Have them summoned here." With that a messenger with a golden tablet was sent to the rest—house to invite them to the palace.

On receiving the invitation the idiot said to Friar Sand, "Brother, do you still think he shouldn't have delivered the letter? Now you can see the advantages of delivering it. I reckon that when the master

delivered it, the king must have thought that the person who brought such a message could not be treated rudely and so laid on a banquet for him. As our master has such a weak appetite he must have remembered us and mentioned our names. This is why the messenger was sent here. After a meal we'll be able to make a good start tomorrow."

"This must have been in our destiny," said Friar Sand. "Let's go." Entrusting their baggage and the horse to the manager of the hostel they accompanied the messenger to court; they kept their weapons with them. When they reached the white jade steps they stood below them and chanted a "na－a－aw" of respect then stood there without moving. Every one of the civil and military officials was horrified.

"Apart from being hideous," they said to each other, "they are far too coarse and vulgar. Why are they standing bolt upright after a mere 'na－a－aw' instead of prostrating themselves before His Majesty? Shocking, quite shocking."

Overhearing this, pig said, "Please don't make rude comments on us, gentlemen. This is the way we look, and although we seem ugly at first sight, after a while we become quite bearable."

The king, who had been quite frightened at the sight of their brutishness, trembled so violently on hearing the idiot Pig talking that he lost his balance and fell off his dragon throne. Fortunately the gentlemen－in－waiting were on hand to help him up again.

This threw Sanzang into such a panic that he fell to his knees and kowtowed without stopping, saying, "Your Majesty, I deserve to die ten thousand deaths, ten thousand deaths. I said that my disciples were too hideous for me to dare to bring them to court for fear of harming your dragon dignity, and now I have given Your Majesty this fright."

The king walked shakily over to him, raised him to his feet, and said, "Thank goodness you warned me about them beforehand, venerable sir. Otherwise I would undoubtedly have died of shock at the sight of them."

When the king had taken some time to calm himself down he asked Pig and Friar Sand which of the two of them was better at subduing fiends.

"I am," said the shameless idiot.

"How do you do it, pray?" the king asked.

"I am Marshal Tian Peng," Pig replied, "and I was exiled to this mortal world for offending against part of the Heavenly Code. Happily I have now returned to the truth and become a monk. I am the best fiend —subduer of all of us who have come here from the East."

"If you are a heavenly general turned mortal," said the king, "you must be good at transformations."

"I wouldn't say that much," Pig replied, "but I can do one or two."

"Show me one," said the king.

"Tell me what you want me to turn into," said Pig. "Turn into a giant, then," said the king.

Pig, who could do thirty—six transformations, now showed off his powers before the steps of the throne.

Clenching his fist and reciting the words of the spell he shouted "Grow!" bowed forward, and grew eighty or ninety feet tall. He looked like one of the paper gods carried at the head of funeral processions. The civil and military officials trembled with fright; monarch and subjects alike gazed at him in stupefaction.

Then the General Guarding the Palace said, "You have certainly grown very tall, venerable sir. How much taller could you grow before you had to stop?"

"It depends on the wind," replied the idiot, talking in his idiotic way. "I can manage quite well in an East or a West wind, and if a South wind blows up I can make a big dent in the sky."

"Then give your magic powers a rest," said the king, more frightened than ever. "We are sure you can do that." Pig contracted himself to his real size and stood in attendance at the foot of the steps once more.

"What weapon will you use to fight the monster on this mission?" the king asked. Pig pulled his rake from his belt and said, "This rake."

"But that would disgrace us," said the king with a smile. "Here we have steel whips, maces, claws on chains, war－hammers, cutlasses, halberds, pole－axes, battle－axes, swords, bills, spears, and battle －scythes. Choose one that suits you－ －that rake doesn't count as a real weapon."

"What Your Majesty doesn't realize," Pig replied, "is that although it's crude I've carried it around with me since I was a child. I depended on it completely when I commanded eighty thousand sailors and marines as marshal of the Milky Way, the Heavenly River. Down in this world as my master's escort I've used it to smash the dens of tigers and wolves in the mountains and to turn the nests of dragons and leviathans upside－down in rivers."

The king was thoroughly delighted and convinced on hearing this, so he ordered nine of his Royal Consorts to fetch a bottle of his own royal wine with which to send the venerable Pig off; then he filled a goblet and presented it to Pig with the words, "May this cup of wine, venerable father, express my gratitude for the service you are going to render. When you capture the evil monster and bring back my daughter you will be rewarded with a state banquet and a thousand pieces of gold." For all his coarseness the idiot accepted it with style.

"Master," he said to Sanzang after chanting a "na－a－aw" of respect, "you should drink this wine first, but His Majesty gave it to me and I dare not disobey him. Please allow me to drink first as it will brace my spirits for the capture of the monster."

He drained the cup in one gulp, refilled it, and handed it to Sanzang, who said, "As I cannot touch alcohol you two must drink it for me." Friar Sand came over and took it. Clouds now sprouted under Pig's feet and he shot up into mid－air.

"Venerable Pig," exclaimed the king, "you can walk on clouds too!"

When Pig had gone Friar Sand drained his cup of wine at one draft too and said, "When the Yellow－robed Monster captured you, master, the pair of us were only just a match for him in combat. I'm afraid that my elder brother won't be able to beat him by himself."

"Yes," Sanzang replied. "You'd better go and help him."

Chapter 29

When Friar Sand too sprang up into the air on a cloud and went off, the anxious king grabbed hold of Sanzang and said, "Stay here with me, venerable sir. Don't you go flying off on a cloud too."

"I, alas, cannot take a single step by cloud." We leave the two of them talking to each other in the palace.

"I'm here, brother," said Friar Sand as he caught Pig up.

"Why?" Pig asked. "The master told me to come and lend you a hand," replied Friar Sand.

"Good, it's as well you've come. We two'll do our damndest and capture this fiend. Even though it won't be anything very big, it'll at least make us famous in this country."

On shimmering clouds they left the country,

Departing from the capital in a blaze of magic light.

On the king's command they came to the mountain cave

To fight hard side by side to capture the evil spirit.

Before long they reached the mouth of the cave and landed their cloud. Pig brought his rake down with all his might on the door of the cave and made a hole the size of a bucket in it. The junior demons guarding it were so frightened that they opened up the gates; at the sight of the pair of them they rushed inside to report, "Bad news, Your Majesty. The long–snouted monk with big ears and the other one with a horrible face have come back and smashed down our doors."

"Pig and Friar Sand again?" exclaimed the monster in astonishment. "How dare they come and break down my door after I've spared their master's life?"

"Perhaps they've come to fetch something they left behind," suggested a junior demon.

"Nonsense," snorted the monster. "Would they break the gate down if they'd just left something behind?" He hastily tied on his armor, took his steel sword, went outside and asked, "Monks, what do you mean by smashing down my door? I spared your master, didn't I?"

"Will you do a decent thing, wretched ogre?" said Pig.

"What?" asked the old monster.

"You forced the Third Princess of the land of Elephantia to come to your cave," said Pig, "and you've made her stay here for thirteen years. You should send her back now. We've come here to capture you on the king's orders, so you'd better hurry in and tie yourself up if you don't want me to hit you." The old fiend was now furious. Just watch him as he gnashes his fangs of steel, glares so hard that his eyes become round with fury, raises his sword, and hacks at Pig's head. Pig avoided the blow and struck back at the monster's face with his rake, after which Friar Sand rushed forward to join in the fight with his staff. This battle on the mountain was not the same as the earlier one:

Chapter 29

Saying the wrong things can make men angry;

Wicked intentions and hurt feelings give birth to wrath.

The great steel sword of the demon king

Sliced down at the head;

Pig's nine–toothed rake

Went for the face.

As Friar Sand let fly with his staff

The demon king parried with his magic weapon.

One wild ogre,

Two holy monks,

Moving to and fro with the greatest of calm.

One says,

"You deserve to die for your crime against the country."

The other replies,

"Interfering fellow, trying to put the world to rights."

"By seizing the princess you have insulted the state," said the one.

"Just mind your own business," said the other.

It was all because of the letter,

That the monks and the monster were now in combat.

When they had fought eight or nine bouts on the mountain side Pig was beginning to tire; his strength was flagging and he could only raise his rake with difficulty. Do you know why they could not hold out against the monster this time? In the first battle all the guardian gods had been helping Pig and Friar Sand as Sanzang was in the cave, so that they had then been a match for the ogre. This time the guardian gods were all looking after Sanzang in Elephantia, which was why Pig and Friar Sand could not hold out against the fiend.

"You come forward and fight him, Friar Sand," said the idiot, "while I go off for a shit." Then with no further thought for Friar Sand he streaked off into the undergrowth of grass, wild figs, thorns and creepers, diving straight in and not bothering about the scratches on his face. Then he fell into a doze, too frightened to come Chapter 29

out again. He kept an ear cocked for the sound of clashing weapons.

Seeing Pig flee, the monster charged at Friar Sand, who could do nothing to stop the ogre from seizing him and carrying him into the cave. The junior fiends tied him up hand and foot. If you don't know what became of him, listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

Chapter 30

An Evil Monster Harms the True Law

The Mind – Horse Remembers the Heart – Ape

Now that he had tied up Friar Sand, the monster did not kill him, hit him, or even swear at him. Instead he raised his sword and thought, "Coming from so great a country the Tang priest must have a sense of propriety – – he can't have sent his disciples to capture me after I spared his life. Hmm. That wife of mine must have sent some kind of

letter to her country and let the secret out. Just wait till I question her." The monster became so furious that he was ready to kill her.

The unwitting princess, who had just finished making herself up, came out to see the ogre knitting his brows and gnashing his teeth in anger.

"What is bothering you, my lord?" she asked with a smile. The monster snorted and started to insult her.

"You low bitch," he said, "you haven't a shred of human decency. You never made the slightest complaint when I first brought you here. You wear clothes of brocade and a crown of gold, and I go out to find anything you need. You live in luxury all four seasons of the year, and we've always been very close to each other. So why do you think only of your mother and father? Why do you have no wifely feelings?"

This so frightened the princess that she fell to her knees and said, "What makes you start talking as if you are going to get rid of me?"

"I'm not sure whether I'm getting rid of you or you're getting rid of me," the monster replied. "I captured that Tang Priest and brought him here to eat, but you released him without asking me first. You must have secretly written a letter and asked him to deliver it for you. There's no other explanation for why these two monks should have made an attack on this place and be demanding your return. It's all your fault, isn't it?"

"Don't blame me for this, my lord," she replied. "I never wrote such a letter."

"Liar," he said. "I've captured one of my enemies to prove it."

"Who?" she asked.

"Friar Sand, the Tang Priest's second disciple." Nobody likes to accept their death, even at their last gasp, so she could only try to keep up the pretence.

"Please don't lose your temper, my lord," she said. "Let's go and ask him about it. If there really was a letter I'll gladly let you kill me; but if there wasn't, you'd be killing your slave unjustly." With no further argument the monster grabbed her by her bejeweled hair with his fist the size of a basket and threw her to the floor in front of him. Then he seized his sword to question Friar Sand.

Chapter 30

"Friar Sand," he roared, "When you two had the impertinence to make your attack was it because the king of her country sent you here after getting a letter from her?"

When the bound Friar Sand saw the evil spirit throw the princess to the ground in his fury then take hold of his sword to kill her, he thought, "It's obvious she must have sent a letter. But she did us a very great favour by sparing our master. If I tell him about it, he'll kill her. No, that would be a terrible thing to do after what she did for us. Besides, I haven't done any good deeds all the time I have been with our master, so as a prisoner here I can pay back my master's goodness to me with my life."

His mind made up, he shouted, "Behave yourself, evil monster. She sent no letter, so don't you mistreat her or murder her. I'll tell you why we came to demand the princess. When my master was your prisoner in this cave he saw what the princess looked like. Later on when he presented his credentials to the King of Elephantia, the king showed him her picture and asked him if he'd seen her on his journey. The king had this picture of her painted long ago, and made enquiries about her all over the place. My master told the king about her, and when he heard this news of his daughter the king gave us some of his imperial wine and sent us to bring her back to the palace. This is the truth. There was no letter. If you want to kill anybody, kill me, and don't be so wicked as to slaughter an innocent woman."

Impressed by Friar Sand's noble words, the monster put aside his sword and took the princess in his arms, saying, "Please forgive me for being so boorishly rude." Then he put her hair up again for her, and turning tender again, urged her to go inside with him. He asked her to take the seat of honour and apologized to her.

In her female fickleness the princess was prompted by his excess of courtesy to think of an idea.

"My lord," she said, "could you have Friar Sand's bonds loosened a little for the sake of our love?" The old fiend ordered his underlings to untie Friar Sand and lock him up there instead.

On being untied and locked up, Friar Sand got up and thought, "The ancients said that a good turn to someone else is a good turn to yourself. If I hadn't helped her out, she wouldn't have had me untied."

The old fiend then had a banquet laid on to calm his wife and make it up to her. When he had drunk himself fairly tipsy he put on a new robe and girded a sword to his waist. Then he fondled the princess and said, "You stay at home and drink, wife. Look after our two sons and don't let Friar Sang get away. While the Tang Priest is in Elephantia I'm going to get to know my relations."

"What relations?" she asked.

"Your father," he replied. "I'm his son－in－law and he's my father－in－law, so why shouldn't we get acquainted?"

"You mustn't go," was her reply.

"Why not?" he asked.

"My father," she answered, "didn't win his country by force of arms; it was handed down to him by his ancestors. He came to the throne as a child and has never been far from the palace gates, so he's never seen a tough guy like you. You are a bit on the hideous side with that face of yours, and it would be very bad if a visit from you terrified him. You'd do better not to go and meet him."

"Then I'll make myself handsome," he said.

"Try it and show me," said the princess.

Chapter 30

The splendid fiend shook himself, and in the middle of the banquet he changed himself into a handsome man.

Elegant he was, and tall.

He spoke like a high official,

His movements were those of a youth.

He was as brilliant as the poet Cao Zhi,

Handsome as Pan An to whom the women threw fruit.

On his head was a hat with magpie feathers,

To which the black clouds submitted;

He wore a robe of jade—coloured silk

With wide and billowing sleeves.

On his feet were black boots with patterned tops,

And at his waist hung a gleaming sword.

He was a most imposing man,

Tall, elegant and handsome.

The princess was thoroughly delighted at the sight of him. "Isn't this a good transformation?" he asked her with a smile.

"Wonderful," she replied, "wonderful. When you go to court like that the king will be bound to accept you as his son—in—law and make his civil and military officials give you a banquet, so if you have anything to drink you must be very careful not to show your real face ——it wouldn't do to let the secret out."

"You don't need to tell me that," he said, "I understand perfectly well myself."

He sprang away on his cloud and was soon in Elephantia, where he landed and walked to the palace gates.

"Please report," he said to the High Custodian of the gate, "that His Majesty's third son—in—law has come for an audience."

A eunuch messenger went to the steps of the throne and reported, "Your Majesty's third son—in—law has come for an audience and is waiting for your summons outside the palace gates." When the king, who was talking with Sanzang, heard the words "third son—in—law" he said to the assembled officials, "I only have two sons—in—law——there can't be a third."

"It must be that the monster has come," the officials replied.

"Then should I send for him?" the king asked.

"Your Majesty," said Sanzang in alarm, "he is an evil spirit, so we mortals can do nothing about him. He knows about the past and the future and rides on the clouds. He will come whether you send for him or not, so it would be better to send for him and avoid arguments."

The king accepted the proposal and sent for him. The fiend came to the bottom of the steps and performed the usual ritual of dancing and chanting. His handsome looks prevented any of the officials from realizing that he was a demon; instead they took him in their mortal blindness for a good man. At the sight of his imposing figure the king thought that he would be a pillar and the savior of the state. "Son－in－law," he asked him,

"where do you live? Where are you from? When did you marry the princess? Why haven't you come to see me before?"

"I come," the monster replied, knocking his head on the ground, "from the Moon Waters Cave in Bowl Mountain."

"How far is that from here?" asked the king.

"Not far," he replied, "only a hundred miles."

"If it's a hundred miles away," said the king, "how did the princess get there to marry you?"

The monster gave a cunning and deceptive answer. "My lord," he said, "I have been riding and shooting since childhood, and I support myself by hunting. Thirteen years ago as I was out hunting one day with falcons, hounds, and a few score retainers when I saw a ferocious striped tiger carrying a girl on its back down the mountainside. I fitted an arrow to my bow and shot the tiger, then took the girl home and revived her with hot water, which saved her life. When I asked her where she was from she never mentioned the word

'princess'－－had she said that she was Your Majesty's daughter, I would never have had the effrontery to marry her without your permission. I would have come to your golden palace and asked for some appointment in which I might have distinguished myself. As she said she was the daughter of ordinary folk I kept her in my home. With her beauty and my ability we fell in love, and we have been married all these years. When we were married I wanted to kill the tiger and serve him up at a banquet for all my relations, but she asked

me not to. There was a verse that explained why I should not:

"'Thanks to Heaven and Earth we are becoming man and wife; We will marry without matchmaker or witnesses.

A red thread must have united us in a former life,

So let us make the tiger our matchmaker.'

"When she said that I untied the tiger and spared its life. The wounded beast swished its tail and was off. Little did I realize that after escaping with its life it would have spent the past years making itself into a spirit whose sole intention is to deceive and kill people. I believe that there was once a group of pilgrims going to fetch scriptures who said that they were priests from the Great Tang. The tiger must have killed their leader, taken his credentials, and made himself look like the pilgrim. He is now in this palace trying to deceive Your Chapter 30

Majesty. That man sitting on an embroidered cushion is in fact the very tiger who carried the princess off thirteen years ago. He is no pilgrim."

The feeble-minded king, who in his mortal blindness could not recognize the evil spirit, believed that his tissue of lies were the truth and said, "Noble son-in-law, how can you tell that this monk is the tiger who carried the princess off?"

"Living in the mountains," he replied, "I eat tiger, dress in tiger, sleep amid tigers, and move among tigers. Of course I can tell."

"Even if you can tell," said the king, "turn him back into his real form to show me."

"If I may borrow half a saucer of water," answered the fiend, "I will turn him back into his real form." The king sent an officer to fetch some water for his son-in-law. The monster put the water in his hand, leapt forward, and did an Eye-deceiving Body-fixing Spell. He recited the words of the spell, spurted a mouthful of water over the Tang Priest, and shouted "Change!" Sanzang's real body was hidden away on top of the hall, and he was turned into a striped tiger. To the king's mortal eyes the tiger had: A white brow and a rounded head,

A patterned body and eyes of lightning.

Four legs,

Straight and tall;

Twenty claws,

Hooked and sharp.

Jagged fangs ringed his mouth,

Pointed ears grew from his brow.

Fierce and powerful, formed like a giant cat,

Wild and virile as a brown bull – calf.

His bristling whiskers shone like silver,

Acrid breath came from his spike tongue.

He was indeed a savage tiger

Whose majesty dominated the palace hall.

One look at him sent the king's souls flying from his body, and all the officials fled in terror except for a handful of gallant generals. They charged the tiger at the head of a group of officers, hacking wildly with every kind of weapon. If the Tang Priest had not been fated to survive, even twenty of him would have been chopped to mince. Luckily for him the Six Dings, the Six Jias, the Revealers of the Truth, the Duty Gods, and the Protectors of the Faith were all protecting him in mid – air and preventing him from being wounded by any of the weapons. After a turmoil that continued until evening they finally caught the tiger, chained it, and put it in an iron cage in the room where officials waited for audience.

The king then ordered his household department to lay on a large banquet to thank his son – in – law for saving his daughter from being killed by the monk. That evening, when the court had been dismissed,

the monster went to the Hall of Silvery Peace. Eighteen Palace Beauties and Junior Concubines had been selected, and they made music, sang and danced, urging the fiend to drink and be merry. The ogre sat alone in the seat of honour, and to left and right of him were all these voluptuous women. When he had been drinking until the second watch of the night he became too intoxicated to restrain his savagery and longer. He jumped up, bellowed with laughter, and turned back into his real self. A murderous impulse came upon him, and stretching out his hand as big as a basket he seized a girl who was playing a lute, dragged her towards him, and took a bite from her head. The seventeen other palace women fled in panic and hid themselves.

The Palace Beauties were terrified,

The Junior Concubines were panic – stricken.

The terrified Palace Beauties

Were like lotuses beaten by the rain at night;

The panic – stricken Concubines

Were like peonies swaying in the spring breezes.

Smashing their lutes, they fled for their lives,

Trampling on zithers as they ran away.

As they went out through the doors they knew not where they went;
In their flight from the hall they rushed everywhere,

Damaging their faces of jade

And bumping their pretty heads.

Every one of them fled for her life;

All of them ran away to safety.

Chapter 30

The women who had fled did not dare to shout as they did not want

to disturb the king in the middle of the night, so they all hid trembling under the eaves of walls, where we shall leave them.

The monster, still in his seat of honour, thought for a moment then drank another bowl of wine, dragged the woman towards him, and took two more gory mouthfuls of her. While he was enjoying himself inside the palace the news was being spread outside that the Tang Priest was really a tiger spirit. The rumour spread like wildfire, and it soon reached the government hostel. Nobody else was there but the white horse, who was eating fodder from a trough. This horse had once been a young dragon prince from the Western Sea who as a punishment for offending against the Heavenly Code had lost his horns and scales and been turned into a white horse to carry Sanzang to the West to fetch the scriptures.

When he heard it being said that the Tang Priest was a tiger spirit he thought, "My master is clearly a good man. That evil spirit must have changed him into a tiger to harm him, whatever shall I do? Monkey's been gone for ages, and there's no news of the other two." By the middle of the night he could wait no longer.

He jumped up and said, "If I don't rescue the Tang Priest I'll win no merit at all." He could restrain himself no longer, so he snapped his halter, shook his bridle and girths loose, and changed himself back into a dragon.

Then he went straight up on a black cloud to the Ninth Heaven. There is a poem to prove it that goes: On his journey West to worship the Buddha

Sanzang met an evil demon.

Now that he had been changed into a tiger

The white horse came to his rescue, trailing its halter.

From up in the air the dragon saw the bright lights in the Hall of Silvery Peace, where eight wax candles were burning on eight great candlesticks. Bringing his cloud down for a closer look he saw the monster sitting by himself in the seat of honour and drinking as he ate human flesh. "Hopeless beast," thought the dragon with a grin, "giving his game away like that. He's broken the counterpoise of his steelyard ——he has exposed himself!

A man—eater can't be a good fellow. Now I know what has happened to our master: he's met this foul ogre. I'll try to fool him. If it comes off

there's still time to rescue our master."

With a shake the splendid dragon king turned himself into a slim and seductive Palace Beauty. Hurrying inside he greeted the ogre and said, "If you spare my life, Your Highness, I'll hold your cup for you."

"Pour me out more wine," he said. The young dragon took the pot and used a Water – controlling Spell to fill his cup so full that the wine stood several inches higher than the rim without spilling.

The monster, who did not know this piece of magic, was delighted with the trick; and when the dragon asked,

"Shall I fill it higher still?" he replied, "Yes, yes." The dragon lifted the pot and poured and poured. The wine rose till it towered as tall as a thirteen – storied pagoda, and still hardly any spilled over. The ogre opened his mouth wide and swallowed the lot, then pulled the dead girl towards him and took another bite.

"Can you sing?" he asked, and the dragon replied, "Yes, in a way." He sang a short song and handed the ogre another cup of wine.

Chapter 30

427

Journey to the West

"Can you dance?" the ogre asked. "Yes, in a way," he replied, "but I can't dance well empty – handed." The ogre pushed his robe aside, brought out the sword he wore at his waist, unsheathed it, and handed it to the dragon, who took it and did a sword dance in front of the banqueting table.

As the monster gazed pop – eyed the dragon stopped dancing and hacked at his face. The ogre side – stepped and immediately seized a cast – iron lantern, that must have weighed a good hundredweight with its stand, with which to parry the sword. As the pair of them came out of the Hall of Silvery Peace, the dragon reverted to his true form and went up into mid – air on a cloud to continue the fight. It was a really vicious combat: One was a monster born and bred on Bowl Mountain;

The other was an exiled dragon from the Western Sea.

One shone as if he were breathing out lightning;

The other's vigor seemed to burst through the clouds.

One was like a white – tusked elephant in a crowd;

The other was a golden – clawed wildcat leaping down to earth.

One was a pillar of jade, towering to heaven,

The other was one of the ocean's golden beams.

The silver dragon danced,

The yellow monster soared,

As the blade cut tirelessly to left and right,

And the lantern flashed to and fro without a pause.

The old monster was as strong as ever, after eight or nine rounds of their battle in the clouds the young dragon was tiring and unable to keep up the fight, so he hurled his sword at the monster. The ogre used a magic trick to catch it, went for the helpless dragon, throwing the lantern at him and hitting him on the hind leg. The dragon brought his cloud straight down to earth, where the canal in the palace saved his life: once he had dived in, the ogre could not find him. Instead he went back to the Hall of Silvery Peace, clutching the sword and the candlestick. There he drank himself to sleep.

The dragon hid at the bottom of the canal for an hour, by which time all was quiet. Gritting his teeth against the pain from his leg, he leapt out of the water and went back to the hostel on a black cloud, where he turned himself back into a horse and bent over the trough once more. The poor animal was covered with sweat, and his leg was scarred.

Chapter 30

Journey to the West

The Thought – horse and the Mind – ape had scattered,

The Lord of Metal and the Mother of Wood were dispersed.

The Yellow Wife was damaged, her powers divided,

The Way was finished, and how could it be saved?

We will leave Sanzang in danger and the dragon in defeat to return to Pig who had been hiding in the undergrowth ever since he abandoned Friar Sand. He had made himself a pigsty there, and slept through to the middle of the night. When he woke up he could not remember where he was. He rubbed his eyes, pulled himself together, and cocked up his ear. In these wild mountains no dogs barked and no cocks crowed. From the position of the stars he worked out that it was around midnight, and thought, "I must go back and rescue Friar Sand. It's all too true that 'You cannot make thread with a single strand, or clap with a single had,' No, no. I'd better go back to the city, see the master, and report on this to the king. He can give me some more brave soldiers to help me rescue Friar Sand."

The idiot went back to the city on his cloud as fast as he could, and in an instant he was back at the hostel. It was a still, moonlit night, and he could not find his master in either wing of the building. There was only the white horse asleep there, his body covered in sweat, and with a greenish wound the size of a dish on his hind leg.

"This is double trouble," thought Pig in horror. "Why is this wretch covered with sweat and injured on his leg?

He hasn't been anywhere. Some crooks must have carried off the master and wounded the horse."

Seeing Pig, the horse suddenly called out, "Elder brother." Pig collapsed from shock, got up again, and was about to flee when the horse took his clothes between his teeth and said, "Brother, don't be afraid of me."

"Why ever have you started to talk today?" asked Pig, who was shaking all over. "Something terrible must have happened to make you do it."

"Do you know that our master is in danger?" the horse asked.

"No," Pig replied.

"You wouldn't," said the horse. "When you and Friar Sand were showing off in front of the king you thought you'd be able to catch the monster and be rewarded for it. Little did you imagine that his powers would be too much for you. You should be ashamed of the way you've come back by yourself without even having any news to report. That monster turned himself into a handsome scholar, came to the palace,

and made the king accept him as his son—in—law. He changed our master into a tiger, who was captured by the officials and put in a cage in the court waiting room. The news made me feel as if my heart were being sliced to pieces. It was already two days since you two went, and for all I knew you might have been killed, so I had to turn back into a dragon and try to rescue our master. When I reached the court I couldn't find him, though I saw the monster outside the Hall of Silvery Peace. I changed into a Palace Beauty to trick him. He made me do a sword dance for him, and when I had him fascinated I took a cut at him. He dodged the blow, picked up a giant lantern in both hands, and soon had me on the run. I flung my sword at him, but he caught it, and wounded me on the hind leg by throwing the lantern at me. I escaped with my life by hiding in the palace canal. The scar is where he hit me with the candlestick."

Chapter 30

"Is this all true?" asked Pig.

"Don't think I'm trying to fool you," said the dragon.

"What are we to do?" said Pig. "Can you move?"

"What if I can?" said the dragon.

"If you can move," said Pig, "then make your way back to the sea: I'll take the luggage back to Gao Village and be a married man again." The dragon's reaction to this was to bite hard on Pig's tunic and not let him go.

Tears rolled down his face as he said, "Please don't give up, elder brother."

"What else can I do but give up?" said Pig. "Friar Sand has been captured by him, and I can't beat him, so what can we do but break up now?"

The dragon thought for a moment before replying, still in tears, "Don't even talk about breaking up, brother.

All you need do to rescue the master is to ask someone to come here."

"Who?" asked Pig.

"Take a cloud back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit as fast as you can, and ask our eldest brother Monkey to come here. With his tremendous ability to beat demons he ought to be able to rescue the master and avenge your defeat."

"Can't we ask someone else?" said Pig. "He hasn't been on the best of terms with me since he killed the White Bone Spirit on White Tiger Ridge. He's angry with me for encouraging the master to say the Band—tightening Spell. I only meant it as a joke——how was I to know the old monk would really say it and drive him away?

Goodness knows how furious he is with me. He definitely won't come. I'm no match for him with my tongue, and if he's disrespectful enough to hit me a few times with that murderous great cudgel of his, it'll be the death of me."

"Of course he won't hit you," said the dragon. "He's a kind and decent Monkey King. When you see him don't tell him that the master's in trouble. Just say, 'The master's missing you.' Once you've lured him here and he sees the situation he won't possibly be angry. He's bound to want to fight the monster. I guarantee that he'll capture the monster and save our master."

"Oh well," said Pig, "oh well. As you're so determined I'll have to go, or else I'll look half-hearted. If Monkey's prepared to come, I'll come back with him; but if he isn't, then don't expect me——I won't be back."

"Go," said the dragon. "I promise he'll come."

The idiot picked up his rake, straightened his tunic, leapt up on a cloud, and headed East. Sanzang was fated to live. Pig had a following wind, so he stuck up his ears for sails and was at the Eastern Ocean in no time. He landed his cloud. Without his noticing it the sun rose as he made his way into the mountains.

As he was going along he suddenly heard voices. He looked carefully and saw Monkey in a mountain hollow with hordes of demons. He

was perched on a rock, and in front of him over twelve hundred monkeys were drawn up in ranks and chanting, "Long live His Majesty the Great Sage."

"He's doing very nicely," thought Pig, "very nicely indeed. No wonder he wanted to come home instead of staying a monk. He has it really nice here, with a big place like this and all those little monkeys at his beck Chapter 30

and call. If I'd had a mountain like this I'd never have become a monk. But what am I to do now I'm here? I must go and see him." As he was rather overawed, Pig did not dare walk boldly over to see him. Instead he made his way round a grassy cliff, slipped in among the twelve hundred monkeys, and started to kowtow with them.

Little did he expect that the sharp–eyed Monkey would see him from his high throne and say, "There's a foreigner bowing all wrong among the ranks. Where's he from? Bring him here." The words were hardly out of his mouth before some junior monkeys swarmed round him, shoved him forward, and threw him to the ground. "Where are you from, foreigner?" asked Monkey.

"If I may be permitted to argue," replied Pig, his head bowed, "I'm no foreigner, I'm an old friend of yours."

"All my monkey hordes look exactly the same," replied the Great Sage, "but from the look of your stupid face you must be an evil demon from somewhere else. Never mind though. If, as an outsider, you want to join my ranks you must first hand in a curriculum vitae and tell us your name before we can put you on the books. If I don't take you on, you've no business to be bowing to me like a madman."

Pig put his arms round his head, which he still kept low, and replied, "I'm sorry. It's an ugly mug. But you and I were brothers for several years; you can't pretend not to recognize me and say that I'm a foreigner."

"Raise your head," said Monkey.

The idiot did so and said, "Look, even if you won't recognize the rest of me, you'll remember my face."

"Pig!" said Monkey with a smile. When Pig heard this he leapt to his feet and said, "Yes, yes. I'm Pig,"

thinking that Monkey would be easier to deal with now he had recognized him.

"Why have you come here instead of going to fetch the scriptures with the Tang Priest?" Monkey asked.

"Have you offended the master and been sent back too? Show me your letter of dismissal."

"I haven't offended him," Pig replied. "He hasn't given me a letter of dismissal, or driven me away."

"Then why have you come here?" asked Monkey. "The master sent me here to ask you back as he's missing you," answered Pig. "He hasn't asked me back," said Monkey, "and he doesn't miss me. He swore an oath by Heaven and wrote a letter of dismissal, so he couldn't possibly miss me or have sent you all this way to ask me back. It certainly wouldn't be right for me to go."

"He's really missing you," said Pig, lying desperately, "he really is."

"Why?" asked Monkey.

"He called out 'disciple' when he was riding along. I didn't hear, and Friar Sand is deaf, so he started missing you and saying that we two were hopeless. He said that you were intelligent and clever, and that you always answered whenever he called. This made him miss you so badly that he sent me over here specially to ask you to come back. Please, please come back with me. You'll save him from disappointment and me from a long, wasted journey."

Monkey jumped down from his rock, lifted Pig to his feet, and said, "Dear brother, it's been good of you to come so far. Won't you come and take a look round with me?"

"It's been a long journey," replied Pig, "and I'm afraid that the master would miss me, so I'd better not."

"Now that you're here," said Monkey, "you really should have a look at my mountain." Not wanting to insist too hard, the idiot went off with him.

The two of them walked hand in hand with the monkey horde following behind as they climbed to the summit of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. It was a beautiful mountain. In the few days since he had been back, Monkey had made it as neat as it ever had been.

It was as green as flakes of malachite,

So high it touched the clouds.

All around it tigers crouched and dragons coiled,

Amid the calls of apes and cranes.

In the morning the peak was covered with cloud,

The evening sun would set between the trees.

The streams splashed like a tinkle of jade,

Waterfalls tumbled with the sound of lutes.

In the front of the mountain were cliffs and rock – faces

At the back were luxuriant plants and trees.

Above it reached to the Jade Girl's washing bowl,

Below it jointed the watershed of the River of Heaven.

In its combination of Earth and Heaven it rivaled the Penglai paradise;
Its blend of pure and solid made it a true cave palace.

It defied a painter's brush and colours;

Even a master could not have drawn it.

Intricate were the strange – shaped boulders,

Adorning the mountain peak.

In the sun's shadow shimmered a purple light;

A magical glow shone red throughout the sea of clouds.

Cave – heavens and paradises do exist on Earth,

Chapter 30

Where the whole mountainside is covered with fresh trees and new blossoms.

As Pig gazed at it he said with delight, "What a wonderful place, brother. It's the finest mountain in the world."

"Could you get by here?" asked Monkey.

"What a question," said Pig with a grin. "This mountain of yours is an earthly paradise, so how could you talk about 'getting by?'"

The two talked and joked for a while then went back down. They saw some young monkeys kneeling beside the path and holding huge, purple grapes, fragrant dates and pears, deep golden loquats, and rich, red tree – strawberries.

"Please take some breakfast, Your Majesty," they said.

"Brother Pig," replied Monkey with a smile, "Your big appetite won't be satisfied with fruit. Never mind though – – if you don't think it too poor you can eat a little as a snack."

"Although I do have a big appetite," said Pig, "I always eat the local food. Bring me a few to taste."

As the pair of them ate the fruit the sun was rising, which made the idiot worry that he might be too late to save the Tang Priest. "Brother," he said, trying to hurry Monkey up, "the master is waiting for us. He wants us back as soon as possible."

"Come and look round the Water Curtain Cave," was Monkey's reply.

"It's very good of you to offer," said Pig, "but I mustn't keep the master waiting, so I'm afraid I can't visit the cave."

"Then I won't waste your time," said Monkey. "Goodbye."

"Aren't you coming?" Pig asked.

"Where to?" Monkey replied. "There's nobody to interfere with me here and I'm free to do just as I like. Why should I stop having fun and be a monk? I'm not going. You can go and tell the Tang Priest that as he's driven me away he can just I forget about me." The idiot did not dare press Monkey harder in case he lost his temper and hit him a couple of blows with his cudgel. All he could do was mumble a farewell and be on his way.

As Monkey watched him go he detailed two stealthy young monkeys to follow him and listen to anything he said. The idiot had gone hardly a mile down the mountainside when he turned round, pointed towards Monkey, and started to abuse him.

"That ape," he said, "he'd rather be a monster than a monk. The baboon. I asked him in all good faith and he turned me down. Well, if you won't come, that's that." Every few paces he cursed him some more. The two young monkeys rushed back to report, "Your Majesty, that Pig is a disgrace. He's walking along cursing you."

"Arrest him," shouted Monkey in a fury. The monkey hordes went after Pig, caught him, turned him upside – down, grabbed his bristles, pulled his ears, tugged his tail, twisted his hair, and thus brought him back.

Chapter 30

433

Journey to the West

If you don't know how he was dealt with or whether he survived, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 31

Pig Moves the Monkey King Through

His Goodness

Sun the Novice Subdues the Ogre Through Cunning

They swore to become brothers,

And the dharma brought them back to their true nature.

When metal and Wood were tamed, the True Result could be achieved; The Mind – Ape and the Mother of Wood combined to make

the elixir.

Together they would climb to the World of Bliss,

And share the same branch of the faith.

The scriptures are the way of self – cultivation,

To which the Buddha has given his own divinity.

The brothers made up a triple alliance,

With devilish powers to cope with the Five Elements.

Sweeping aside the six forms of existence,

They head for the Thunder Monastery.

As he was being dragged and carried back by the crowd of monkeys, Pig's tunic was shreds. "I'm done for," he grumbled to himself, "done for. He'll kill me now."

Before long he was back at the mount of the cave, where Monkey, sitting on top of a rock – face, said to him angrily, "You chaff – guzzling idiot. I let you go, so why swear at me?"

"I never did, elder brother," said Pig on his knees, "May I bite off my tongue if ever I did. All I said was that as you weren't coming I'd have to go and tell the master. I'd never have dared to swear at you."

"You can't fool me," Monkey replied. "If I prick my left ear up I can hear what they're saying in the Thirty – third Heaven, and if I point my right ear down I can know what the Ten Kings of Hell and their judges are discussing. Of course I could hear you swearing at me as you walked along."

Chapter 31

"Now I see," said Pig. "With that devilish head of yours you must have changed yourself into something or other to listen to what I said."

"Little ones," shouted Monkey, "bring some heavy rods. Give him twelve on the face, then twelve on the back. After that I'll finish him

off with my iron cudgel."

"Elder brother," pleaded Pig, kowtowing desperately, "I beg you to spare me for our master's sake."

"That good and kind master? Never!" said Monkey.

"If he won't do," begged Pig, "then spare me for the Bodhisattva's sake." The mention of the Bodhisattva made Monkey relent slightly.

"Now you've said that I won't have you flogged," he replied. "But you must tell me straight and without lying where the Tang Priest is in trouble— —which is presumably why he sent you to try and trick me."

"He isn't in trouble," Pig protested, "he's honestly missing you."

"You really deserve a beating," said Monkey, "for still trying to hood —wink me, you moron. Although I've been back in the Water Curtain Cave, I've stayed with the pilgrim in my mind. The master must have been in trouble at every step he has taken. Tell me about it at once if you don't want that flogging."

Pig kowtowed again and said, "Yes, I did try to trick you into coming back. I didn't realize that you would see through it so easily. Please spare me a flogging and let me go, then I'll tell you."

"Very well then," replied Monkey, "get up and tell me." The junior monkeys untied his hands. He leapt to his feet and began looking around wildly. "What are you looking at?" asked Monkey.

"I'm looking at that wide empty path for me to run away along," said Pig.

"That wouldn't get you anywhere," Monkey said. "Even if I gave you three days' start I'd still be able to catch you up. Start talking. If you make me lose my temper, that'll be the end of you."

"I'll tell you the truth," said Pig. "After you came back here Friar Sand and I escorted the master. When we saw a dark pine forest the master dismounted and told me to beg for some food., When I'd gone a very long way without finding anyone I was so tired that I took a snooze in the grass; I didn't realize that the master would send Friar Sand after me. You know how impatient the master is; be went off for a stroll by himself, and when he came out of the wood he saw a gleaming golden pagoda. He took it for a monastery, but an evil spirit called the Yellow —robed Monster who lived there captured him. When I and Friar

Sand came back to find him, all we saw was the white horse and the baggage. The master had gone. We searched for him as far as the entrance to the cave and fought the monster. Luckily the master found someone to save him in the cave.

She was the third daughter of the king of Elephantia and she'd been carried off by the monster. She gave the master a letter to deliver to her family and persuaded the ogre to let him go. When we reached the capital and delivered the letter the king asked our master to subdue the monster and bring the princess home. I ask you, brother, could the master catch a monster? We two went off to fight him, but his powers were too much for us: he captured Friar Sand and made me run away. I hid in the undergrowth. The monster turned himself into a handsome scholar and went to court, where he introduced himself to the king and turned the master into a tiger. The white horse changed himself back into a dragon in the middle of the night and went to look for the master. He didn't find him, but he did see the monster drinking in the Hall of Silvery Peace, so he turned himself into a Palace Beauty. He poured wine and did a sword dance for the ogre in the hope of finding a chance to cut him down, but the ogre wounded his hind leg with a lantern, it was the white horse who sent me Chapter 31

here to fetch you. 'Our eldest brother is a good and honorable gentleman,' he said, 'and gentlemen don't bear grudges. He's sure to come and rescue the master.' Please, please remember that 'if a man has been your teacher for a day, you should treat him as your father for the rest of his life'. I beg you to save him."

"Idiot," said Monkey, "I told you over and over again before leaving that if any evil monsters captured the master you were to tell them I am his senior disciple. Why didn't you mention me?" Pig reflected that to a warrior a challenge was more effective than an invitation and said, "It would have been fine if we hadn't used your name. It was only when I mentioned you that he went wild."

"What did you say?" asked Monkey.

"I said, 'Behave yourself, kind monster, and don't harm our master. I have an elder brother called Brother Monkey who is an expert demon −subduer with tremendous magic powers. If he comes he'll kill you, and you won't even get a funeral.' This made the ogre angrier than

ever, and he said, 'I'm not scared of Monkey. If he comes here I'll skin him, tear his sinews out, gnaw his bones, and eat his heart. Although monkeys are on the skinny side, I can mince his flesh up and deep −fry it.'" This so enraged Monkey that he leapt around in a fury, tugging at his ear and scratching his cheek.

"Did he have the gall to say *that* about me?" he asked.

"Calm down, brother," said Pig. "I specially remembered all his insults so as to tell you."

"Up you get," said Monkey, "I didn't have to go before, but now he's insulted me I must capture him. Let's be off. When I wrecked the Heavenly Palace five hundred years ago all the generals of Heaven bowed low at the sight of me and called me 'Great Sage'. How dare that fiend have the nerve to insult me behind my back! I'm going to catch him and tear his corpse to shreds to make him pay for it. When I've done that I'll come back here."

"Quite right," said Pig. "When you've captured the monster and got your own back on him, it'll be up to you whether you come on with us."

The Great Sage jumped down from the cliff, rushed into the cave, and took off all his devil clothes. He put on an embroidered tunic, tied on his tigerskin kilt, seized his iron cudgel, and came out again. His panic −stricken monkey subjects tried to stop him, saying, "Where are you going, Your Majesty, Great Sage? Wouldn't it be fun to rule us for a few more years?"

"What are you saying, little ones?" replied Monkey. "I have to protect the Tang Priest. Everyone in Heaven and Earth knows that I am the Tang Priest's disciple. He didn't really drive me away. He just wanted me to take a trip home and have a little relaxation. Now I've got to attend to this. You must all take good care of our household. Plant willow and pine cuttings at the right season, and don't let things go to pieces. I must escort the Tang Priest while he fetches the scriptures and returns to the East. When my mission is over I'll come back to this happy life with you here." The monkeys all accepted his orders.

Taking Pig's hand, Monkey mounted a cloud and left the cave. When they had crossed the Eastern Sea he stooped at the Western shore and said, "You carry on at your own speed while I take a bath in the sea."

"We're in a terrible hurry," said Pig. "You can't take a bath now?"

"You wouldn't understand," Monkey replied. "While I was at home I developed rather a devil – stink, and I'm afraid that with his passion for cleanliness the master would object." Only then did Pig realize that Monkey really was being sincere and single – minded.

Chapter 31

After Monkey's dip they were back on their clouds and heading West again. When they saw the gleam of the golden pagoda Pig pointed at it and said, "That's where the Yellow – robed Monster lives. Friar Sand is still there."

"You wait for me up here," said Monkey, "while I take a look around the entrance before fighting the evil spirit."

"No need," said Pig, "as he's not at home."

"I know," said Monkey. The splendid Monkey King landed his gleaming cloud and looked around outside the entrance. All he could see was two children, one of about ten and the other of eight or nine, hitting a feather – stuffed ball with curved sticks. Without bothering to find – out whose children they were, Monkey rushed up at them as they played, grabbed them by the tufts of hair that grew on the top of their heads, and flew off with them. The sobs and curses of the terrified boys alarmed the junior devils of the Moon Waters Cave, who rushed in to tell the princess that someone, they did not know who, had carried her sons off. These boys, you see, were the children of the princess and the ogre.

The princess ran out of the cave to see Monkey holding her sons on the top of a cliff and about to hurl them over.

"Hey, you, I've never done you any harm," she screamed desperately, "so why are you kidnapping my sons?

Their father won't let you get away with it if anything happens to them, and he's a killer."

"Don't you know who I am?" said Monkey. "I'm Monkey, the senior disciple of the Tang Priest. If you release my brother Friar Sand from your cave, I'll give you your sons back. You'll be getting a good bargain – – two for one." The princess hurried back into the cave, told

the junior demons who were on the door to get out of her way, and untied Friar Sand with her own hands.

"Don't let me go, lady," said Friar Sand, "or I'll be letting you in for trouble with that monster when he comes back and asks about me."

"Venerable sir," the princess replied, "what you said about the letter saved my life, so I was going to let you go anyhow, and now your elder brother Monkey has come here and told me to release you."

At the word "Monkey" Friar Sand felt as though the oil of enlightenment had been poured on his head and the sweet dew had enriched his heart. His face was all happiness and his chest filled with spring. He looked more like someone who had found a piece of gold or jade than someone who had just been told that a friend had arrived. He brushed his clothes down with his hands, went out, bowed to Monkey and said, "Brother, you've dropped right out of the blue. I beg you to save my life!"

"Did you say one word to help me, Brother Sand, when the master said the Band–tightening Spell?" asked Monkey with a grin. "Talk, talk, talk. If you want to rescue your master you should be heading West instead of squatting here."

"Please don't bring that up," said Friar Sand. "A gentleman doesn't bear a grudge. We've been beaten, and we've lost the right to talk about courage. Please rescue me."

"Come up here," Monkey replied, and Friar Sand sprang up on the cliff with a bound.

When Pig saw from up in the air that Friar Sand had come out of the cave, he brought his cloud down and said, "Forgive me, forgive me, Brother Sand."

Chapter 31

"Where have you come from?" asked Friar Sand on seeing him.

"After I was beaten yesterday," said Pig, "I went back to the capital last night and met the white horse, who told me that the master was in trouble. The monster has magicked him into a tiger. The horse and I

talked it over and we decided to ask our eldest brother back."

"Stop chattering, idiot," said Monkey. "Each of you take one of these children to the city. Use them to provoke the monster into coming back here to fight me."

"How are we to do that?" asked Friar Sand.

"You two ride your clouds, stop above the palace," said Monkey, "harden your hearts, and drop the children on the palace steps. When you're asked, say they're the sons of the Yellow-robed Monster, and that you two brought them there. The ogre is bound to come back when he hears that, which will save me the trouble of going into town to fight him. If we fought in the city, the fogs and dust storms we stirred up would alarm the court, the officials and the common people."

"Whatever you do, brother," said Pig with a laugh, "you try to trick us."

"How am I tricking you?" asked Monkey.

"These two kids have already been scared out of their wits," Pig replied. "They've cried themselves hoarse, and they're going to be killed at any moment. Do you think the monster will let us get away after we've smashed them to mince? He'll want our necks. You're still crooked, aren't you? He won't even see you, so it's obvious you're tricking us."

"If he goes for you," said Monkey, "fight your way back here, where there's plenty of room for me to have it out with him."

"That's right," said Friar Sand, "what our eldest brother says is quite right. Let's go." The pair of them were an awe-inspiring sight as they went off, carrying the two boys.

Monkey then jumped down from the cliff to the ground in front of the pagoda's gates, where the princess said to him, "You faithless monk. You said you'd give me back my children if I released your brother. Now I've let him go, but you still have the boys. What have you come back for?"

"Don't be angry, princess," said Monkey, forcing a smile. "As you've been here so long, we've taken your sons to meet their grandfather."

"Don't try any nonsense, monk," said the princess. "My husband Yellow

Robe is no ordinary man. If you've frightened those children, you'd better clam them down."

"Princess," said Monkey with a smile, "do you know what the worst crime on earth you can commit is?"

"Yes," she replied.

"You're a mere woman, so you don't understand anything," said Monkey.

"I was educated by my parents in the palace ever since I was a child," she said, "and I remember what the ancient book said: 'There are three thousand crimes, and the greatest is unfilial behavior.'"

"But you're unfilial," replied Monkey. "'My father begot me, my mother raised me. Alas for my parents. What an effort it was to bring me up.' Filial piety is the basis of all conduct and the root of all goodness, so why did you marry an evil spirit and forget your parents? Surely this is the crime of unfilial behavior." At this the princess' face went red as she was overcome with shame.

"What you say, sir, is so right," she said. "Of course I haven't forgotten my parents. But the monster forced me to come here, and he is so strict that I can hardly move a step. Besides, it's a long journey and nobody could deliver a message. I was going to kill myself until I thought that my parents would never discover that I hadn't run away deliberately. So I had nothing for it but to drag out my wretched life. I must be the wickedest person on earth." As she spoke the tears gushed out like the waters of a spring.

"Don't take on so, princess," said Monkey. "Pig has told me how you saved my master's life and wrote a letter, which showed you hadn't forgotten your parents. I promise that I'll catch the monster, take you back to see your father, and find you a good husband. Then you can look after your parents for the rest of their lives.

What do you say to that?"

"Please don't get yourself killed, monk," she said. "Your two fine

brothers couldn't beat Yellow Robe, so how can you talk about such a thing, you skinny little wretch, all gristle and no bone? You're like a crab, the way your bones all stick out. You don't have any magic powers, so don't talk about capturing ogres."

"What a poor judge of people you are," laughed Monkey. "As the saying goes, 'A bubble of piss is big but light, and a steelyard weight can counterbalance a ton.' Those two are big but useless. Their bulk slows them down in the wind as they walk, they cost the earth to clothe, they are hollow inside, like fire in a stove, they are weak and they give no return for all that they eat. I may be small, but I'm very good value."

"Have you really got magic powers?" the princess asked.

"You've never seen such magic as I have," he replied. "I have no rival when it comes to subduing monsters and demons."

"Are you sure you won't let me down?" said the princess.

"Yes," said Monkey.

"As you're so good at putting down demons, how are you going to catch this one?"

"Hide yourself away and keep out of my sight," said Monkey. "Otherwise I may not be able to deal with him properly when he comes back. I'm afraid you may feel more friendly towards him and want to keep him."

"Of course I won't want to keep him," she protested. "I've only stayed here under duress."

"You've been his wife for thirteen years," said Monkey, "so you must have some affection for him. When I meet him it won't be for a child's game. I shall have to kill him with my cudgel and my fists before you can be taken back to court."

The princess did as she had been told and went off to hide in a quiet place. As her marriage was fated to end she had met the Great Sage. Now that the princess was out of the way the Monkey King turned himself with a shake of his body into the very image of the princess and went back into the cave to wait for the ogre.

Pig and Friar Sand took the children to the city of Elephantia and hurled them down on the palace steps, where the wretched boys were

smashed to mincemeat; their blood splashed out and their bones were

pulverized. The panic－stricken courtiers announced that a terrible thing had happened－－two people had been thrown down from the sky. "The children are the sons of the Yellow－robed Monster," shouted Pig at the top of his voice, "and they were brought here by Pig and Friar Sand."

The monster, who was still asleep in the Hall of Silvery Peace, heard someone calling his name as he was dreaming, turned over, and looked up to see Pig and Friar Sand shouting from the clouds. "I'm not bothered about Pig," he thought, "but Friar Sand was tied up at home. However did he escape? Could my wife have let him go? How did he get to catch my sons? Perhaps this is a trick Pig is using to catch me because I won't come out and fight with him. If I'm taken in by this I'll have to fight him, and I'm still the worse for wear after all that wine. One blow from his rake would finish off my prestige. I can see through that plan. I'll go home and see whether they are my sons before arguing with them."

Without taking leave of the king, the monster went back across the forested mountains to his cave to find out what had happened. By now the palace knew he was an evil spirit. The seventeen other women who had fled for their lives when he ate the Palace Beauty had told the king all about it early the next morning, and his unannounced departure made it even clearer that he was an ogre. The king told the officials to look after the false tiger.

When Monkey saw the monster coming back to the cave he thought of a way to trick him. He blinked till the tears came down like rain, started to wail for the children, and jumped and beat his breast as if in grief, filling the cave with the sound of his sobbing. The monster failed to recognize who Monkey really was and put his arms round him. "What makes you so miserable, wife?" he asked.

"Husband," said Monkey, weeping as he concocted his devilish lies, "How true it is that 'A man without a wife has no one to look after his property; a woman who loses her husband is bound to fall'. Why didn't you come back yesterday after going to the city to meet your father－in－law? Pig came and seized Friar Sand this morning, and then

they grabbed our sons and refused to spare them despite all my pleas. They said they were taking them to the palace to meet their grandfather, but I haven't seen them all day. I don't know what's become of them, and you were away. I've been so miserable at losing them that I can't stop crying." The monster was furious.

"My sons?" he asked.

"Yes," Monkey replied, "Pig carried them off."

The monster, now jumping with rage, said, "Right, that's it. He's killed my sons. He'll die for this. I'll make that monk pay for it with his life. Don't cry, wife. How are you feeling now? Let me make you better."

"There's nothing wrong with me," said Monkey, "except that I've cried so much my heart aches."

"Never mind," the monster replied. "Come over here. I've got a treasure here that you just have to rub on your pain to stop it hurting. But be very careful with it and don't flick it with your thumb, because if you do you'll be able to see my real body."

Monkey was secretly delighted. "What a well—behaved fiend," he thought, "giving that away without even being tortured. When he gives me the treasure I'll flick it to see what kind of monster he really is." The ogre then led him to a remote and secluded part of the cave and spat out a treasure about the size of a hen's egg. It was magic pill skillfully fashioned from a piece of a conglomeration of internal secretion. "What a splendid thing," Monkey thought. "Goodness knows how many times it had to be worked, refined and mated before becoming such a magic relic. Today it was fated to meet me."

The ape took it, rubbed it over his pretended pain, and was just going to flick it with his thumb when the monster took fright and tried to grab it from him. The crafty Monkey popped it into his mouth and swallowed it. The monster clenched his fist and hit at him, but Monkey parried the blow, rubbed his face, and reverted to his real form with a shout of, "Behave yourself, ogre. Take a look and see who I am."

"Wife," said the shocked monster, "however did you get that terrible face?"

"I'll get you, you damned fiend," said Monkey. "I'm not your wife. Can't you even recognize your own grandfather?" The monster, now beginning to see the light, said, "You do look a bit familiar."

"Take another look," said Monkey, "I won't hit you."

"I know you by sight," the monster said, "but I can't remember your name. Who are you? Where are you from? Where have you hidden my wife? Why did you swindle me out of my treasure? This is a disgusting way to behave."

"As you don't know who I am," said Monkey, "let me tell you that I am Sun Wukong, Brother Monkey, the Tang Priest's senior disciple. I'm your ancestor by a clear five hundred years."

"Nonsense," the ogre replied, "nonsense. I know that the Tang Priest only had two disciples when I captured him. They were called Pig and Friar Sand. Nobody mentioned anyone by the name of Monkey. You must be a fiend from somewhere or other who has come to trick me."

"I didn't come here with the other two," said Monkey, "because my master is a kind and merciful man who sent me back home for killing too many evil spirits. You ought to know your ancestor's name."

"What sort of man are you?" asked the monster, "how can you have the face to come back after your master has sent you away?"

"You wouldn't understand, you damned monster," said Monkey, "that when a man has been your teacher for a single day, you should treat him as your father for the rest of his life, and that father and son should never let the sun set on a quarrel. You've harmed my master, so of course I've come to rescue him. Even if I could ignore that, it's quite outrageous that you insulted me behind my back."

"I never insulted you," said the monster.

"Pig told me you did," replied Monkey.

"You shouldn't believe that sharp–tongued old gossip," said the monster.

"Let's stop beating about the bush," said Monkey. "You've treated me very shabbily for a guest from far away.

You may not have any wine or fine delicacies to feed me but you do have a head, so stretch it out and let me hit it with my cudgel – – that'll do instead of tea."

The mention of hitting made the monster bellow with laughter. "You've got it all wrong this time, Monkey,"

he said. "You shouldn't have come in if you wanted to fight me. I have a thousand devils of all sizes in here.

Even if you were covered with arms you'd never be able to fight your way out."

"Nonsense," replied Monkey. "Never mind one thousand – – if you had thousands or tens of thousands of them I'd only need to see them clearly for my every blow to strike home. I'll wipe the lot of you out."

Chapter 31

441

Journey to the West

The monster at once ordered all the fiends and ogres in and around the cave to muster with their weapons and put a close blockade on all the doors. Monkey was delighted to see them, and wielding his cudgel with both hands he shouted "Change!" and suddenly had six arms and three heads. Then he shook his gold – banded cudgel and turned it into three gold – banded cudgels. He went into action with his six arms and three cudgels.

He was a tiger in a sheepfold, a hawk in a chicken run. The poor little demons had their heads smashed to pulp, while their blood flowed like water. He rushed to and fro as if there was nobody else there until only the old ogre was left.

He followed Monkey outside and said "Insolent ape. How dare you come here and bully us?"

Monkey turned, beckoned to him and said, "Come here, come here. Let me win the credit for killing you."

The monster struck at the head with his sword, and Monkey riposted to the face with his cudgel. They fought it out amid the mists on the mountain top.

Mighty was the magic of the Great Sage,

Awful the monster's power.

One of them wielded an iron cudgel;

The other, a sword of tempered steel.

When the sword was raised it shone with a bright aura;

The parrying cudgel was wreathed in cloud.

They leapt to and fro protecting their heads,

Turning and somersaulting over and over.

One of them changed his face with every breeze,

The other stood still and shook his body.

One glared with fiery eyes as he stretched out his simian arm, The other's golden pupils flashed as he twisted his tigerish waist.

They were locked in mortal combat

As sword and cudgel struck without mercy.

The Monkey King wielded his iron club according to the martial classic, And the monster's swordplay followed the ancient manuals.

One was a demon king experienced in the black arts,

The other used magical powers to protect the Tang Priest.

The ferocious Monkey King became fiercer than ever,

The heroic monster grew an even greater hero.

They fought in space, ignoring death,

All because the Tang Priest went to see the Buddha.

They had fought fifty or sixty rounds without issue when Monkey thought, "That bloody monster's sword is as good as my cudgel. I'll pretend to give him an opening and see if he can tell it's a trick." The Monkey King raised his cudgel and did a "Reaching Up to a Tall Horse" movement. The monster, not realizing that this was a trick, and imagining that he saw a real opening, took a tremendous swipe at Monkey with his sword.

Monkey at once did a high swing to avoid the blow, then struck at the monster's head with a "Stealing a Peach from under the Leaves" movement and knocked him so hard he vanished without a trace. Monkey put his cudgel away and looked for him but without success.

"Wow," exclaimed Monkey in astonishment, "I didn't just hit him——I knocked him out of existence. But if I really killed him there ought at least to be some blood and pus, and there's no sign of any. Perhaps he got away." He leapt up on a cloud to look around, but nothing was moving. "My eyes can see anything at a glance," he thought, "so how can he have got away so mysteriously? Now I see. He said he seemed to recognize me, so he can't be an ordinary monster. He must be some spirit from Heaven."

This was too much for Monkey, who lost his temper and somersaulted up to the Southern Gate of Heaven with his cudgel in his hands. The startled Heavenly Generals Pang, Liu, Gou, Bi, Zhang, Tao, Deng, and Xin bowed low on either side of the gateway, not daring to block his way. They let him fight his way through the gates and straight on to the Hall of Universal Brightness, where the four great Heavenly Teachers Zhang, Ge, Xu and Qiu asked, "What have you come for, Great Sage?"

"As I was escorting the Tang Priest to Elephantia an evil monster abducted a princess and harmed the master.

I had to fight him, and in the middle of our battle he disappeared. I thought that he couldn't be an ordinary monster and was probably a spirit from Heaven, so I've come to check up if any wicked deities have left their posts." On hearing this the Heavenly Teachers went and reported it to the Jade Emperor in the Hall of Miraculous Mist. He ordered an investigation. They found that nobody was missing among the Nine Bright Shiners, the Gods of the Twelve Branches, the five Dippers of North, South, East, West and Centre, the hosts of the Milky Way, the Five Peaks, the Four Rivers, and all the other gods of Heaven. Then they investigated outside the Palace of the Dipper and the Bull, and found that one of the Twenty—eight Constellations, the

Strider, was missing.

"Strider, the Wooden Wolf, has gone down to Earth," they reported to the throne.

"How long has he been away from Heaven?" the Jade Emperor asked.

"He has missed four roll–calls," they replied, "and with one roll–call every three days that makes thirteen days."

"Thirteen days in Heaven would be thirteen years down on Earth," said the Emperor, and he ordered the Strider's fellow stars to go down and bring him back to Heaven.

Chapter 31

443

Journey to the West

On receiving this edict the twenty–seven other constellations went out through the gates of Heaven and startled the Strider as each chanted his own spell. Do you know where he had been hiding? He had been one of the heavenly generals who was beaten when Monkey had sacked the Heavenly Palace, and he had lain low in a mountain stream that masked his demonic cloud and kept him out of sight. Only when he heard the other constellations shouting their spells did he dare to emerge from the water and go back to Heaven with them.

The Great Sage was blocking the gates of Heaven and would have killed him but for the pleas of the other constellations, who saved him and escorted him to see the Jade Emperor. The monster now produced his golden tablet of office from his belt and kowtowed on the floor of the palace, admitting his guilt.

"Strider the Wooden Wolf," said the Jade Emperor, "why did you go off by yourself instead of being content with the infinite beauty of Heaven?"

"I deserve to die, Your Majesty," the Strider replied. "That daughter of the king of Elephantia was no ordinary mortal. She was a Jade Maiden in the Hall of Incense who wanted to have an affair with me. As we did not want to defile the Heavenly Palace she decided to become a mortal first and was reborn in a king's palace.

Then I became an evil monster and occupied a mountain in order not

to let her down. I carried her off to my cave, and we were man and wife for thirteen years. 'Every bite and every sip is preordained,' as the saying goes, and now the Great Sage has succeeded in bringing me here." The Jade Emperor withdrew his tablet of office and degraded him to be a menial helping Lord Lao Zi stoke his fires in the Tushita Palace. If he did well he would be restored to his previous post; if not, his sentence would be made heavier. Monkey was delighted to see how the Jade Emperor dealt with him, and chanting a "na – a – aw" of respect he said to the assembled gods, "Gentlemen, I'm off."

"That monkey is as ill – mannered as ever," chuckled the Heavenly Teachers, "just chanting a 'na – a – aw' and going without thanking Your Majesty for your celestial kindness in catching the monster for him."

"We can consider ourselves fortunate," said the Jade Emperor, "if he leaves without disturbing the peace of Heaven."

The Great Sage brought his shining cloud straight down to the Moon Waters Cave on Bowl Mountain, found the princess, and told her off for becoming a mortal and marrying a fiend. As he was doing this he heard Pig and Friar Sand shouting in mid – air, "Leave us a few demons to polish off, brother."

"I've already wiped them out," Monkey replied.

"Doesn't matter," said Friar Sand. "Let's take the princess back to the palace. Don't stare at her, Pig. We'd better do some distance – shortening magic."

The princess heard a rush of wind in her ears, and in a moment she was back in the city. The three disciples took her to the throne hall, where she bowed to her royal parents and met her sisters again. All the officials came to bow to greet her. Then she reported, "We are indebted to the infinite powers of the venerable Monkey for the defeat of the Yellow – robed Monster and my rescue."

"What type of monster was he?" the king asked.

"Your Majesty's son – in – law," Monkey replied, "is the Strider constellation from Heaven, and your daughter was a Jade Maiden who held the incense until she decided to become a mortal and came down to this world.

This marriage was predestined. When I went up to the Heavenly Palace and submitted a memorial to him, the Jade Emperor found that

the monster had missed four roll—calls and had been away from Heaven for thirteen days, which is thirteen years down here on earth. The Emperor sent his fellow stars down to fetch him, then banished him to the Tushita Heaven, where he is to redeem his sins. That's how I rescued your daughter and Chapter 31

brought her here." The king thanked Monkey and told him to go and see his master.

The three disciples left the throne hall and went with all the courtiers to the antechamber, where the iron cage was carried in and the false tiger unchained. Monkey was the only one who could see that he was human; all the others thought he was really a tiger. As Sanzang was under the demon's spell he could not move, and although he was clear in his mind, he was unable to open his mouth or his eyes.

"What a fine monk you are, master," said Monkey, "getting yourself into this revolting shape. You accused me of being a murderer and sent me home for it, but you wouldn't be such an awful sight if your heart had been set on goodness."

"Save him, brother, don't tell him off," said Pig.

"It was you who put him up to it all," said Monkey. "You were his favorite disciple. Why didn't you save him instead of sending for me? Besides, I told you that I'd go back when I'd defeated the monster and avenged that insult." Friar Sand went over and knelt down before him.

"As the old saying goes," he pleaded, "'If you won't do it for the monk's sake, do it for the Buddha's sake.' I beg you to save him now that you're here. I wouldn't have gone all that way to ask you to come if we'd been able to save him ourselves."

"I couldn't bear not to save him," replied Monkey, raising Friar Sand to his feet. "Bring me some water." Pig flew back to the hostel, fetched the horse and luggage, took the golden begging bowl from it, half—filled it with water, and handed it to Monkey. Monkey took the water in his hand, said the words of a spell, and spurted it at the tiger's head. The evil magic was dissolved, and the tiger—aura was dispersed.

Sanzang was seen in his true form once more. Once he had gathered

himself together and opened his eyes he saw Monkey, took hold of him, and said, "Monkey, where have you come from?" Friar Sand, who was standing in attendance, told him all about how Monkey had been asked back, defeated the monster, rescued the princess, dispersed the tiger – aura, and come back to the palace. "Worthy disciple," said Sanzang, full of gratitude, "thank you, thank you. When we return to the East from our journey to the West I shall report to the Tang Emperor that you have won the greatest distinction."

"Don't mention it," said a smiling Monkey, "don't mention it. The best way you can show your gratitude is by not saying that spell." When the king heard about all this he thanked the four of them and gave a great vegetarian banquet for them in the Eastern wing. After this expression of the king's kindness master and disciples took their leave of him and set out for the West. The king and his courtiers came a long way to see them off, after which

The monarch returned to the palace to rule his country,

The monk went on to Thunder Monastery to see the Buddha.

If you don't know what happened next or when they reached the Western Heaven, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 31

445

Journey to the West

Chapter 32

On Flat – Top Mountain the Duty God Delivers a Message

In Lotus Flower Cave Pig Runs into Trouble

The story tells how after Monkey had rejoined the Tang Priest the four of them headed West, united in their shared determination. The king of Elephantia had escorted them beyond his capital to thank them for bringing back his daughter. From there they traveled on, eating when hungry and drinking when thirsty, moving by day and resting at night. By now it was spring.

A light breeze ruffled the silky green catkins of willows,

And the view was splendid.

The season encouraged the birds to sing;

The flowers bloomed in the warm sun,

Making the whole world fragrant.

A pair of swallows came to the tree in the courtyard;

Now was the time to enjoy the spring.

Amid the world's red dust and the city's streets,

Light silks were worn to the sound of lute and pipe,

As flower vied and the cup was passed around.

Master and disciples were enjoying their journey when they saw a mountain blocking their way. "Be careful, disciples," said the Tang Priest. "I'm worried that tigers and wolves may prevent us from crossing that high mountain ahead."

"As a man of religion," said Monkey, "you shouldn't say that sort of thing. Don't you remember what the *Heart Sutra* the Rook's Nest Hermit taught you says— —'If one relies on the prajna—paramita, he is free in his mind, he has no fear, is rid of dreamlike thoughts of unreality and enjoys ultimate Nirvana.' All you have to do is

'Wipe the dust off your mind,

Wash out the dirt from your ear.

Without the most terrible suffering

You cannot be a great man.'

There's no need to be so glum. With me here you'll come to no harm even if the sky falls down, so why be scared of wolves and tigers?" The Tang Priest reined in his horse and replied:

"When I left Chang'an on imperial orders,

I was determined to worship the Buddha in the West,

Where his golden image shines in the sacred land,

And the jade hair gleams in the pagoda."

"I shall search the nameless rivers of the world,

And climb all unknown mountain ranges.

I long to cross the mighty, misty waves;

But when, O when, will I find my rest?"

When Monkey heard this he chuckled and said, "You'll have no difficulty in that. When you've completed your mission all your destinies will be over and all your dharmas will be empty, so of course you'll be able to rest then." This cheered up Sanzang, who gave his dragon–horse the rein and urged it forward. As they climbed the mountain they found it truly craggy and precipitous.

Towering peaks,

Tapering pinnacles.

Down in the deep and winding stream,

Beside the solitary cliff.

Down in the deep and winding stream,

You can hear the serpents playing and splashing in the water;

Beside the solitary cliff,

Amid the trees on the precipice, tigers whisk their tails.

Look up,

And the blue sky is high above the peaks;

Turn round,

And the heavens join the deeps in the valley.

Climbing it

Is like ascending a ladder;

Descending

Is like going into a pit.

This is indeed a weird and craggy ridge,

A wall of tapering cliffs.

On the craggy ridge,

The medicine – gatherer moves in fear;

On the sheer rock – face

The firewood – collector cannot take a step.

Wild goats and horses all run free

And many are the hares and mountain oxen.

The mountain is so high it blots out sun and stars;

One often meets evil monsters and gray wolves.

The path is hard to follow and difficult for the horse:

How will they ever see the Buddha at the Thunder Monastery?

As Sanzang reined in his horse to look at the mountain he saw that they had reached a most difficult spot.

There was a wood – gatherer standing on the green, grassy slope, and this was what he looked like: On his head a battered blue felt hat,

On his body a black woolen tunic.

The battered felt hat

That kept off sun and cloud was a strange sight;

In his black woolen tunic

He was amazingly happy and carefree.

The steel axe in his hand had been sharpened till it shone;

He cut dry wood and made it into bundles.

Spring hung from his carrying – pole,

And he was happy throughout the four seasons.

His appearance was relaxed,

And his mind free from anxiety.

He had accepted his lot throughout his life;

Fame and disgrace never bothered him on this mountain.

The wood – gatherer

Was cutting down dead wood upon the slope

When he saw the monk approaching from the East.

Giving his axe a rest, he came out of the tress,

And, climbing fast, soon scaled the rock – face.

"Stop here for a moment on your journey West," he shouted. "I must warn you that there is a pack of vicious ogres and fierce wolves on this mountain. They eat travelers from the East who are heading West."

The news terrified Sanzang out of his wits. Trembling in the saddle, he turned round sharply and called for his disciples.

"Did you hear what the woodman said?" he asked. "There are ogres and wolves on this mountain. Do any of you dare ask him for more details?"

Chapter 32

"Don't worry, Master," said Monkey, "I'll find out from him."

Brother Monkey hurried up the mountain, and addressing the woodman as "Elder Brother" he asked all about it. "Why have you come here, venerable sir?" asked the woodman, returning his greeting.

"To tell you the truth, elder brother," said Monkey, "We have come from the East and are heading West to fetch the scriptures. That's my master on the horse. He's a bit timid, so when you told him about the ogres and wolves he sent me to ask you about them. How long have they been here? Are they experts or just beginners?

Please tell me about them. Then I can make the gods of the mountain and the local deities march them off."

At this the woodman threw back his head and roared with laughter. "You really are a mad monk," he said.

"I'm not mad," replied Monkey, "I'm talking sense."

"If you're talking sense," said the woodman, "then how can you say you'll have them marched off?"

"You must be related to them," said Monkey, "putting on those airs and blocking our way to talk that nonsense to us. If you're not related to them you're either a neighbour or a friend of theirs."

"This is too much, mad monk," said the woodcutter with another laugh. "The warning I've come specially to give you is meant well. I tell you to be on your guard all the time as you travel along, but you're holding me responsible for all those demons. Never mind whether I happen to know what these demons do. How could you possibly have them marched off even if I did know. Where would you send them?"

"If they were sky monsters," replied Monkey, "I'd send them to the Jade Emperor, and if they were earth monsters I'd send them to the Earth Palace. Western ones would go to die Buddha and Eastern ones to the Sage. I'd send Northerners to the True Martial God of the North and Southerners to the Fire God. Dragon spirits would go to the Lord of the Seas and demons to King Yama. They all have somewhere to go. I know the people in all those places, so I'd only need to write out an

order for the monsters to be sent there at the double the very same night."

"You mad monk," said the woodcutter with a mocking laugh, "you may have traveled in the clouds and learned a little magic, but even if you can expel evil spirits and bind demons you've never come up against such vicious fiends."

"What's so vicious about them?" asked Monkey.

"This mountain is about two hundred miles across," said the woodcutter, "and it's called Flat—top Mountain.

There is a cave in it called the Lotus Flower Cave where two devil chieftains live. They are so determined to capture monks that they've drawn pictures of them and found out the name of the man they want to eat— —the Tang Priest. You'll be all right provided you come from anywhere but Tang. But if you're from there, don't carry on."

"The land of Tang," replied Monkey, "is precisely where we're from."

"Then they'll eat you," said the woodcutter.

"We're in luck," said Monkey, "we're in luck. The only thing is that I don't know how they're going to eat us."

"How do you want them to eat you?" the woodcutter asked.

"If they eat my head first," said Monkey, "that will be fine. But if they start with my feet, I'll suffer."

"What difference does it make whether they start with your head or feet?" the woodcutter asked.

"You have no experience of it," said Monkey. "If they start with my head, they'll have it off with one bite and I'll be dead. Whether they fry me, saute me, or stew me I won't feel the slightest pain. But if they start from my feet they can chew my ankles, crunch up my legs, and eat their way up to my waist with me still alive and in agony. It would be going through torment in small installments. That's why I'd suffer."

"They've been there for a long time, monk," said the woodcutter, "and the moment they get you they'll tie you up, pop you in the steamer, and eat you whole."

"Even better," said Monkey with a grin, "even better. That won't be at all painful; it'll just be a bit hot and close."

"This is nothing to joke about, monk," said the woodcutter. "Those monsters have five treasures that they carry about with them, and their magic powers are enormous. Even if you're one of the jade pillars of the heavens or one of the golden beams that support the sea you may well have to pass out in order to get the Tang Priest through."

"How often?" Monkey asked.

"Three or four times," replied the woodcutter.

"That's nothing," said Monkey, "nothing at all. We all pass out seven or eight hundred times a year, so it will be easy to pass out three or four times more and then we'll be able to get through."

The fearless Great Sage, whose one thought was to protect the Tang Priest, left the woodcutter and hurried back. When he reached the horse standing on the mountainside he said, "It's nothing much, Master. It's true that there are a few evil spirits here, but the local people only worry about them because they are timid. With me here there's no need for you to be afraid of them, so let's be on our way again." Sanzang was relieved to hear this, and he followed Monkey's lead.

As they traveled along they realized that woodcutter had disappeared some time back. "Why can't we see the woodcutter who gave us the message?" asked Sanzang.

"What lousy luck," said Pig. "We would have to meet a ghost in broad daylight."

"He must have gone into the forest to look for some more firewood," said Monkey. "I'll take a look." Opening wide his fiery eyes with their golden pupils, the splendid Great Sage searched the mountain, but no sign of the woodcutter was to be seen. Then he looked up into the clouds and saw the Duty God of the Day there. He sprang up there himself and cursed him for a hairy devil several times before saying, "Why didn't you tell me straight instead of transforming yourself and putting on that act for me?"

The Duty God bowed to him anxiously and said, "Please forgive me for being so late with the warning. Those monsters really have enormous magic powers and can perform all kinds of transformations. You'll need all your skill and cunning to protect your master. You won't possibly reach the Western Heaven if you are at all slack."

Monkey dismissed the Duty God. He was feeling worried as he landed his cloud and went up the mountainside until he found Sanzang, Pig and Friar Sand pressing ahead. "If I tell the master straight what the

Duty God said," he thought, "the master won't be able to face up to it and will start crying. But if I don't tell him and keep him in the dark he won't know how things stand, and it'll be a great nuisance for me if he gets captured by monsters. I'd better go and see Pig. I can send him ahead to fight the monster. If he wins, that will be something to his credit. If he can't do it and gets captured by the monster, I can go and rescue him, which will give me a chance to show what I can do and make myself famous." As he made these calculations he wondered whether Pig would try to slip out of it and be protected by Sanzang. He decided he would have to force him into doing it.

The Great Sage resorted to a trick. He rubbed his eyes till they watered, then went up to the master. When Pig saw him he said to Friar Sand, "Put your carrying–pole down and unpack the luggage. We two will split it."

"What do you mean, split it?" asked Friar Sand.

"Divide it," said Pig. "You can go back to the River of Flowing Sands to be a monster, and I'll go back to Gao Village to see my wife. We can sell the white horse to buy the wood for the coffin the master will be needing when he grows old. Then we can break up instead of going on to the Western Heaven."

When Sanzang heard this he said, "How can you talk such nonsense in the middle of the journey?"

"Who's talking nonsense? I'll say it again," said Pig. "Can't you see that Monkey's coming back in tears? He's a real tough guy who isn't afraid of going down into the earth or up into the sky, or of being cut, burnt, or even being boiled in oil, so if he comes along deep in gloom and

with the tears streaming down his face there must be monsters and wolves on this craggy mountain that softies like us could never get past."

"Stop that nonsense," said Sanzang. "I'll ask him what he has to say. Tell me straight," he said to Monkey,

"what is bothering you. Why are you crying? Are you trying to frighten us?"

"The person who gave us the message just now," replied Monkey, "was the Duty God of the Day. He said that the evil spirits here are so ferocious that it will be hard to get through; besides, we'll never be able to make our way across these steep mountains. Let's go another day."

Trembling with fear at this news, Sanzang tugged at Monkey's tigerskin kilt and said, "Why these thoughts of turning back when we've already done half the journey?"

"It's not that I'm wavering," said Monkey, "but we'd be no match for so many monsters. 'A lump of iron in the furnace can only make a few nails.'"

"You are right," said Sanzang, "it would be very difficult by yourself. As the military classic says, 'few are no match for many'. But I also have Pig and Friar Sand for you to deploy as your subordinates. Make a joint effort to clear the path and take me over the mountain. Then you will receive your just reward."

As Brother Monkey's little show had only wrung these words out of his master, he wiped away his tears and said, "Pig will have to do two things I tell him to if you're to have even one chance in three of crossing the mountain as you want to, Master. If he won't do these two things for me you'll have no hope at all."

"Brother," Pig said, "if we can't cross the mountain, let's disband. Leave me out of this."

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "ask your brother what he wants you to do."

"What do you want me to do, brother?" the idiot asked.

"Look after the master and patrol the mountains," Monkey replied.

"But looking after the master means staying put," said Pig, "and patrolling means moving. You can't ask me to stay put for a bit then move for a bit. I can't do both at once."

"I'm not asking you to do them both," said Monkey, "I just want you to do one of them."

"That's much easier," said Pig with a smile, "though I don't know what you mean by looking after the master or by patrolling the mountains. Tell me what you want, then I can do the one that suits me."

"Looking after the master," said Monkey, "means that if he wants to go for a stroll you must support him, and if he wants to eat you must beg some food for him. If he's hungry you'll be beaten. If he looks at all sallow you'll be beaten. If he's any thinner you'll be beaten."

"That's very difficult," said Pig with alarm. "There's nothing to looking after him or holding him up— —even carrying him would be easy enough. But if he sends me to beg for food in a village the people on this path to the West won't realize that I'm a monk going to fetch the scriptures. They'll think that I'm a growing wild boar come down from the mountains. A crowd of men with forks, rakes and brooms will surround me, capture me, slaughter me, and salt me down for the New Year celebrations. That would be the end of me, wouldn't it?"

"Then you can patrol the mountains," said Brother Monkey.

"What would that involve?" asked Pig.

"You would have to go into these mountains," said Monkey, "to find out how many monsters there are, and all about the mountains, and what the monsters' caves are like, so that we can go across it."

"Nothing to it," replied Pig. "I'll patrol the mountains." The idiot hitched up his tunic, grasped his rake, and proudly struck deep into the mountains. His spirits were high as he hurried along the path.

Monkey could not hold back an unkind laugh. "Wretched ape," said Sanzang, "you haven't a shred of affection for your brothers, only jealousy. You trick him into patrolling the mountain with your cunning words, and then you laugh at him."

"I'm not laughing at him," said Monkey. "My laugh means something. Just you see – –he won't patrol the mountains or dare to visit any monsters. He'll hide up somewhere for a while then make up some story to fool us with."

"How do you know so much about him?" asked Sanzang.

"It's what I reckon he'll do," replied Monkey "and if you don't believe me I'll go and take a look at him. I can help him subdue any demons and find out at the same time how sincere is his wish to see the Buddha."

"Very good," said Sanzang, "very good. But don't you go making a fool of him." Monkey assented, and as he hurried up the mountainside he turned himself into the tiniest of insects with a shake of his body. He now looked very neat and small:

On his delicate wings he could lightly dance in the breeze;

His slim waist was as fine as a needle.

As he darted through the reeds or passed under flowers

He was faster than a shooting star.

Bright were his eyes,

Delicate his voice.

Of all insects he was the smallest,

Slim and elegant, but deeply clever.

If he were resting in the woods on a day off,

You would never see him,

And a thousand eyes could never find him.

He flew off, soon caught up with Pig, and perched on a bristle behind his ear; but Pig walked on, unaware that he was carrying a passenger.

After two or three miles Pig dropped his rake, turned back to look at the Tang Priest, and began to curse at him, gesticulating widely.

"Soft－headed old monk," he said, "vicious Monkey, and weak－minded Friar Sand. They're all enjoying themselves back there while they fool me into walking off here. We're all going to fetch the scriptures and we all want our reward, so why should I be the one to reconnoiter these mountains? Hm! If they know there are monsters around we should hide up for a while. But that's not even half good enough for them. They have to send me off by myself to find them. What lousy luck. I'll go and have a sleep somewhere. When I go back I can give him some kind of vague answer and say I've reconnoitered the mountains. That'll pay them back."

Feeling pleased with himself for the moment Pig grasped his rake and set off. When he saw a reddish grassy slope in a mountain hollow he went straight to it, made himself a bed with the help of his rake, and lay down to sleep, saying as he stretched himself out, "This is the life. Not even Monkey can be as comfortable as I am." Monkey, of course, had heard every word form behind his ear, and he could not resist the temptation to fly round and tease him. He shook himself and turned into a woodpecker.

His sharp iron beak was coloured red,

His green－blue feathers were glistening bright.

His steel claws were as sharp as nails,

And when hungry he broke the forest silence.

Dry and rotten timber was what he loved;

He hated lone and sturdy old trees.

His round eyes and flicking tail made him a lively creature,

And pleasant was the sound of his tapping.

This bird was neither too big nor too small, and would have weighed only two or three ounces. Its beak was copper－red, its legs were iron

—black, and it came flying down with a swish of its wings.

When it pecked at the lip of Pig, who was sleeping with his head down, the idiot scrambled to his feet and shouted, "A monster, a monster! It jabbed me with its spear. My mouth's hurting terribly." As he felt it with his hand he made the blood flow.

"Dammit," he said, "nothing especially good has happened to me, so what's this lucky red doing on my lips?"

At the sight of his bloody hand he started to look wildly about himself, muttering on the while, and when he saw nothing he said, "There's no monster here, so how did I get jabbed?" Then he looked up and saw a woodpecker flying above him.

"The wretch," he said, gnashing his teeth, "it's bad enough being put upon by Monkey, but now you're getting at me. I suppose you didn't realize I was human and thought my snout was a black, rotten old tree full of insects. You pecked me to find yourself some. I'll have to tuck my snout into my clothes." With that the idiot went back to sleep.

Monkey flew down again and pecked him behind the ear, at which the idiot leapt up again and said, "This damned bird is really going for me. It must have a nest full of eggs or chicks here and be attacking me to stop me taking it. Very well then, I won't sleep here." He picked up his rake and left the red grassy slope to continue on his way.

Monkey, beside himself with delight, thought, "Even with his eyes wide open the blockhead can't recognize one of his own people."

With a shake the splendid Great Sage turned himself back into a tiny insect and perched himself behind Pig's ear. Another mile or so deeper into the mountains there were three square granite boulders the size of tables in a hollow. Pig put down his rake and chanted a "re—e—er" to them.

"The idiot," grinned Monkey to himself, "those boulders aren't human. They can't talk or return his greeting.

He's wasting his time being polite to them." In fact the idiot was pretending that they were Sanzang, Friar Sand and Monkey, and practicing his speech to them.

"When I go back," he said, "if the master asks me about monsters, I'll say that there are some here. When he asks what sort of mountain this is he'll think I'm talking nonsense if I say it's made of mud or earth or

tin or copper or flour or paper or simply painted. I'll say it's a mountain made of rock, and if he asks about the caves I'll say there is a stone cave. What about the gates? I'll say they're iron – plated and studded. When he asks how deep the cave is I'll say it has three sections, one behind another. If he really interrogates me and wants to know how many studs there are in the gates I'll say I was too excited to notice. Now I've got my story off pat I'll be able to make a fool of Monkey."

His story now concocted, he headed back along the path, dragging his rake behind him, little knowing that Monkey had heard everything behind his ear and flown off ahead when he started back. Monkey resumed his Chapter 32

real form to see his master, who said, "Ah, here you are. Why hasn't Pig come back?"

"He's still cooking up his story," said Monkey, "he'll be here soon."

"How could that stupid fool, whose ears cover his eyes, ever make up a story?" said Sanzang. "You must be the one who is lying."

"You're covering up for him, master," replied Monkey. "I heard it all from his own mouth." He told Sanzang how Pig had been sleeping in the grass when he was woken up with a woodpeckers' peck, how he had expressed his homage to the boulders, and how he had concocted a story about the mountains being made of rock with a stone cave that had iron – plated gates and monsters living in it. It was not long before the idiot approached. He was going through his story again, his head bowed low, to make sure that he did not forget it when Monkey shouted, "Hey, idiot, what are you reciting?"

Pig pricked up his ears, looked around, and said, "I'm back."

He fell to his knees and was picked up by Sanzang, who said, "You look exhausted, disciple."

"I am," replied Pig. "With all that walking and climbing I'm completely whacked."

"Are there monsters?" Sanzang asked.

"Yes," said Pig, "there certainly are. There's a whole pile of them."

"What sort of send – off did they give you?"

"They called me Ancestor Pig and Grandfather Pig, gave me noodle soup and vegetarian dishes, talked to me, and sent me back over the mountain with drums and banners," Pig replied.

"This must be some dream you had while you were asleep in the grass," said Monkey, so frightening the idiot that he shrank two inches.

"Lord Monkey," he said, "however did you know I had a sleep?"

Monkey went up to him, grabbed hold of him, and said, "Come here, I've something to ask you."

"Ask me if you must," said the idiot, now shaking with fright, "but why do you have to grab me like that?"

"What sort of mountain was it?" asked Monkey.

"A mountain of rock," replied Pig.

"What sort of cave?"

"Stone."

"What sort of gates?"

"Iron – plated."

"How deep?"

"There were three sections."

"No need to say more," said Monkey, "I remember the rest. I'll say it all for you to make sure that the master believes it."

"Cheek!" said Pig. "You've not been there, so you can't possibly know what to say for me."

"'If he wants to know how many studs there are in the gates I'll say I was too excited to notice.' Isn't that right?" said Monkey. The panic-stricken idiot fell to his knees again as Monkey continued, "You chanted homage to those boulders and talked to them as if they were us three, didn't you? Then you said, 'Now I've got this story off pat I'll be able to make a fool of Monkey,' didn't you?"

"Brother," pleaded the idiot, now kowtowing desperately, "you couldn't have heard all that while I was patrolling the mountains."

"I'll get you, you chaff-guzzling moron," said Monkey, "sleeping when you'd been told to patrol the mountains. If the woodpecker hadn't pecked you awake you'd still be asleep now. When you'd been woken up you concocted this pack of lies that might have ruined our whole journey. Stretch your ankle out and I'll give you five strokes of my cudgel to teach you a lesson."

"A mere touch from that murderous cudgel," said Pig, "would break my skin, and the feel of it would crack my sinews. Five blows would kill me."

"If you didn't want to be beaten," said Monkey, "why did you lie?"

"I only did it once," said Pig, "and I'll never do it again."

"As it was only once I'll give you three."

"My lord," said Pig, "half a blow would be the death of me." The idiot's only recourse was to cling to Sanzang and beg him to put in a good word for him.

"When Monkey told me you were concocting lies," said Sanzang, "I did not believe him, yet now you clearly deserve a beating. But as there are so few of you to serve me as we cross these mountains, you had better let him off, Monkey, until we are on the other side."

"As the old saw goes," said Monkey, "'to obey parental instructions is great filial piety.' As the master tells me not to beat you I'll let you off. Go and reconnoiter again. I'll show you no mercy if you lie or mess things up this time."

The idiot rose to his feet and went off again. As he hurried along the path he suspected at every step that Monkey was following in some form or other, so he thought everything he saw might be Monkey. When after two or three miles a tiger came bounding up from the mountainside he raised his rake and said, "Come to see whether I'm

lying, brother? This time I'm not."

Further along a strong mountain wind blew a dead tree down and sent it tumbling towards him, at which he stamped, beat his chest and said, "What a way to treat me, brother. I said I wouldn't lie, but you go and turn yourself into a tree to attack me."

A little later he saw a white–necked crow cawing in front of him. "You're shameless, brother," he said,

"shameless. I meant it when I said I wouldn't lie, so why've you turned into a crow? Come to listen to me?" In Chapter 32

fact Monkey was not following him this time, and Pig's crazed suspicions that Monkey was there wherever he went were the product of his own imagination. We will leave the idiot with his frights for the time being.

In this Flat–top Mountain there was a Lotus Flower Cave where there dwelt two fiends, the Senior King Gold Horn and the Junior King Silver Horn. Gold Horn sat in his chair of office and said to Silver Horn, "It's a long time since we patrolled the mountain."

"A fortnight," replied Silver Horn.

"You should make a patrol today," said Gold Horn.

"Why today?" asked Silver Horn.

"You can't have heard the news," said Gold Horn, "that the Tang Priest, the younger brother of the Tang Emperor in the East, has been sent to worship the Buddha in the West. He has three followers called Sun the Novice, Pig and Friar Sand, so with their horse there are five of them in all. Find them and bring them to me."

"If we want to eat some humans," said Silver Horn, "we can catch a few anywhere. Why not let this monk go wherever he's going?"

"You don't realize," replied Gold Horn, "that when I left Heaven a few years back I heard that the Tang Priest was a mortal incarnation of the Venerable Golden Cicada, and a holy man who had pursued goodness for ten lives and lost not a drop of his original essence. Anyone who

eats his flesh will live forever."

"If you can live for ever by eating his flesh," said Silver Horn, "we won't have to bother with meditation, winning merit, refinish elixirs, or matching the male and female. All we need do is eat him. I'm off to fetch him."

"You're too impatient, brother," said Gold Horn. "Don't be in such a hurry. It would be wrong to rush out and catch some monk who isn't the Tang Priest. I remember what he looks like and I once drew pictures of him and his disciples. Take them with you and check any monks you meet against them." He went on to tell him all their names, and when Silver Horn had their pictures and knew their names he went out of the cave, mustered thirty underlings, and left to patrol the mountain.

Pig's luck was out. He walked straight into the gang of monsters who blocked his way and said, "Who are you? Where are you from?" The idiot looked up, lifted his ears from over his eyes, and saw to his horror that they were evil ogres.

"If I say I'm a pilgrim," he thought, "they'll catch me. I'll say I'm just a traveler." The junior demon reported to the king that he was a traveler. Among the thirty junior demons there were some who had recognized him and some who had not, and one of these who had recognized him remembered Silver Horn being given his instructions.

He said, "This monk looks like Pig in the picture, Your Majesty."

Silver Horn had the picture hung up, which made Pig think with horror, "No wonder I'm in such low spirits these days— —they've got my spirit here."

Chapter 32

As the junior devils held it up with their spears, Silver Horn pointed at it and said, "The one on the white horse is the Tang Priest, and the hairy—faced one is Sun the Novice."

"City god," thought Pig, "you can leave me out. I'll offer you the triple sacrifice and 24 cups of pure wine..."

He muttered prayers as the devil continued, "The tall dark one is Friar Sand, and that's Pig with a long snout and big ears." At the mention of himself Pig tucked his snout into his clothes.

"Bring your snout out, monk," said the monster.

"I was born like this," said Pig, "so I can't bring it out." The monster ordered the junior devils to pull it out with hooks, at which Pig hastily thrust it out and said, "I just feel shy about it. Here it is. Look at it if you must, but don't hook it."

Recognizing Pig, the monster raised his sword and hacked at him. Pig parried him with his rake and said,

"Behave yourself, my lad, and take this."

"You took your vows quite late," said the monster with a smile.

"Clever boy," replied Pig, "but how did you know?"

"From the way you handle that rake," the monster said, "you used it to level up the ground in a vegetable garden. You must have stolen it."

"You don't know this rake, my boy," said Pig. "It's not the sort used in ground—leveling: Its teeth are like a dragon's claws,

Flecked with gold in tigerish shapes.

Against a foe it blows a freezing wind,

And in a battle it shoots out flame.

It brushes away obstacles in the Tang Priest's path,

Capturing devils on the way to the Western Heaven.

When whirled, its vapors obscure the sun and moon,

And its black clouds darken the stars.

When it flattens Mount Tai the tigers tremble;

Dragons are frightened when it overturns the ocean.

Even if you have some tricks, you monster,

One blow from this rake will leave nine bloody holes."

This made the monster more determined that ever, and with his Seven −starred Sword he battled thorough twenty inconclusive rounds with Pig on the mountain. Pig fought back with deadly fury, and at the sight of him pricking up his ears, spewing out saliva, and waving his rake with grunts and shouts, the frightened demon turned round to bring all his underlings into the battle beside him.

Had he been fighting only the one enemy, Pig would have done fine, but when all the little devils rushed him he lost control, could no longer put up any resistance, and fled in defeat. As he was not paying attention to the uneven path he tripped over a creeper and fell over. He was just picking himself up and starting off again when a junior demon who was lying there tugged at his ankle and brought him tumbling down like a dog eating muck. A crowd of demons seized him and carried him back to the cave, holding him by the bristles, ears, legs and tail. Indeed:

A single demon is hard enough to destroy;

Countless disasters can barely be averted.

If you don't know whether Pig lived or not, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 33

Heterodoxy Confuses the True Nature

The Primal Deity Helps the Original Heart

Taking Pig into the cave the monster said, "Here's one, brother."

"Let me have a look at him," said the older demon with delight.

"Isn't this the one?" asked the younger demon.

"No," the other replied, "you've caught the wrong one. He's useless."

"Your Majesty," said Pig, taking his chance, "I'm just a useless monk, so let me go. I'm scarcely human."

"No, don't let him go, brother," said the younger monster. "He may be no use himself, but he's with the Tang Priest. Pig's his name. We can soak him in the drinking—water pool at the back till his bristles come out, salt him and dry him to eat with our wine some rain day."

"Dammit," said Pig, "I would have to run into a devil who's a salt—pork peddler." The junior demons carried Pig inside and threw him into the pool.

Sanzang meanwhile was sitting on the slope feeling uneasy. His ears were hot and his eyes twitched.

"Wukong," he said, "Pig's been a long time patrolling the mountain. Why isn't he back?"

"Don't you understand his mentality yet, Master?" said Monkey.

"What mentality?" Sanzang asked.

"If there were monsters in the mountains he'd be completely helpless," said Monkey. "He'd make a tremendous fuss and come rushing back to tell me. I don't think that there can be any monsters. I expect he found the path easy and went straight ahead."

"If he has gone ahead," said Sanzang, "where shall we meet him? This is a vast wilderness. It won't be like finding him in a city or a market—place."

"Mount your horse and stop worrying," said Monkey. "That lazy idiot won't be walking fast, so you only have to make your horse get a move on. We're bound to catch him up and continue our journey together." The Tang Priest mounted his horse as asked, and Monkey led the way into the mountains as Friar Sand carried the baggage.

"Brother," said Gold Horn the senior demon king to Silver Horn the junior demon king, "as you've captured Pig we can be sure that the Tang Priest is here. Make another search and don't get the wrong one this time."

"Right away," said Silver Horn, who immediately mustered fifty junior

demons and set out on patrol.

As they went along they saw an auspicious cloud drifting and circling around. "The Tang Priest is here," said the junior demon king.

"Where?" the other demons asked.

"An auspicious cloud always shines above a good man's head and an evil effluence rises over a bad man," said Silver Horn. "The Tang Priest is an incarnation of the Venerable Golden Cicada. He's a holy man who has cultivated his conduct for ten lives. That's why he has that auspicious cloud."

When the others still could not see it the junior demon king pointed again and said, "There it is." Sanzang shuddered thrice in the saddle, once each time the demon pointed.

"Why did I shudder, disciples?" he asked uneasily.

"Probably it's indigestion," said Friar Sand.

"Nonsense," said Monkey, "it must be because these steep mountains make the master feel nervous. Don't be frightened. You'll feel better when I've cleared the path with my cudgel." Monkey then ran through all the routines in the military manuals as he swung his cudgel up and down and all around in front of his master's horse. The Tang Priest watched as he displayed divine powers unmatched on earth.

At the sight of Monkey hacking his way forward the demon almost died of terror; his souls went flying as he watched from the mountain top. "Well," he found himself saying, "now I know that all I've been hearing about Sun the Novice for years is absolutely true."

"Your Majesty," said the junior demons, coming up to him, "you're boosting your enemy and making yourself small. Why? Who is it who's so terrific?"

"With Monkey's magic powers we'll never be able to eat the Tang Priest," said Silver Horn.

"If you're not up to it," said the junior demons, "we'll send some of us

to ask the senior king to send all the troops in our cave into battle. If we all work together they can't possibly get away."

"You've never seen that iron cudgel," said the junior king. "He's more than a match for a whole army, so with only four or five hundred of us we wouldn't have a hope against that cudgel of his."

"In that case," said the other demons, "we'll never be able to eat the Tang Priest. There was no point in capturing Pig. Let's free him."

"We were right to capture him and shouldn't let him go," said the junior king. "We may not be able to eat the Tang Priest yet but sooner or later we will."

"How many years will that take?" the others asked.

"It won't be a matter of years," replied the junior king. "In my opinion we must catch him by cunning, not by being vicious. Try to grab him by force and we won't get so much as a smell of him. But if we make friends with him by kindness we'll be able to get him by trickery."

"Please find a place for us in your plan, Your Majesty," said the little demons.

"Go back to the camp," the junior demon king told them, "but don't let on to His Senior Majesty. If he gets alarmed and gives the game away our plan will be ruined. I can catch the Tang Priest through magical transformations." As the other demons went away he leapt down the mountainside to the path, shook himself and changed into a aged Taoist. This is what he looked like:

A gleaming star – hat,

Unkempt white hair.

An embroidered belt round a cloak of feathers,

Cloud sandals tied with yellow coir.

Clear of spirit and bright – eyed as an immortal,

Strong and light like one who will live for ever.

He could be compared to the Taoist Riding a Buffalo,

But is more like the Master of the White Scroll.

This false image could be a real one;

His deception appears to be the truth.

There he was, beside the path, pretending to be a Taoist who had broken his leg. His feet were covered in blood. "Help help," he shouted.

Chapter 33

Just as Sanzang was happily walking along, supported by the Great Sage Monkey and Friar Sand, he heard a shout of "Help me, Father."

"Well I never," said Sanzang. "Who could that be shouting in these wild and uninhabited mountains? It must be someone who's been frightened by tigers, leopards or wolves." Reining in his horse he called, "Who's that in trouble? Come out." The demon crawled out from the undergrowth and kowtowed noisily for all he was worth before the Tang Priest, who was most upset to see that he was a Taoist and of such advanced years at that. He dismounted rapidly and helped the old man to his feet, begging him to rise.

"It's agony," said the demon, "agony."

When the Tang Priest released his hold and looked down he saw that blood was pouring from the old man's foot. "Where have you come from, sir," asked a shocked Sanzang. "and how did you injure your foot?"

"West of this mountain, Father," lied the demon, "there is a pure and quiet Taoist temple. I am a priest there."

"What were you doing, wandering around here instead of looking after the incense and reciting the scriptures and the law in your temple?" Sanzang asked.

"The other day a benefactor of ours from South of the mountain invited all us priests to perform a service for his natal star and spread blessings for him. I was about halfway there with my disciple— —we were late— —when a ferocious and strongly patterned tiger carried my disciple off. As I staggered along shaking with terror and not knowing where to go I lost my balance on a scree and injured my foot. I can't

find my way back. Thank heavens I have met you today, Father. I beg you in your great mercy to save me. If we find our way back to the temple, I'd even sell myself into slavery to repay your kindness."

"Sir," replied Sanzang, completely taken in, "you and I share a common destiny. I an a Buddhist priest and you are a Taoist. Although we wear different robes, we cultivate our conduct according to the same principles.

Were I to fail to save you I would not be a true monk. But help you though I would, you can't walk."

"I can't even stand, let alone walk," replied the demon.

"Never mind, never mind," said Sanzang. "I can walk, so you can ride my horse for a while and give it back when we reach your temple."

"You are very generous and I am most grateful," said the demon, "but I have hurt my thigh and couldn't ride."

"Indeed," said Sanzang, who then instructed Friar Sand to put the luggage on the horse and carry the Taoist over his shoulders. Friar Sand assented.

The monster turned round at once and looked closely at Friar Sand. "Father," he said, "I got such a scare from that tiger, but this terrible −looking monk frightens me even more. I'd be too afraid to let him carry me."

"Wukong, you carry him," said Sanzang.

"Certainly, certainly," replied Monkey. The demon recognized him and docilely allowed himself to be carried by him, saying no more.

"That old Taoist doesn't know what he's doing," chuckled Friar Sand. "Fancy refusing to let me carry you and wanting Monkey to instead. If it wasn't for our master he'd smash you against a sharp boulder and break all your sinews."

As Monkey carried the demon on his shoulders he muttered to himself with some amusement, "Wretched demon, how dare you try to

provoke me? Do you think I'm a mere child? Your devilish nonsense may be good enough to hoodwink the Tang Priest but it won't fool me. I can see that you are a local mountain demon. I reckon you want to eat my master. He's no ordinary person——he's not for you to eat. Besides, if you want to eat him you'll have to give a good half to me."

Hearing Monkey's mutterings the monster replied, "Father, I'm a Taoist monk from a decent family who was unlucky enough to meet that tiger today. I'm no evil spirit."

"If you were afraid of the tiger why didn't you recite the Great Bear Scripture?" Monkey asked.

Sanzang, hearing Monkey's grumbling just as he was mounting the horse, chastised him: "Insolent ape. 'Better to save a human life than to build a seven—storied pagoda.' If you're carrying him, just get on with it. Stop talking about 'Great Bear Scriptures' or 'Little Bear Scriptures.'"

"You're in luck, damn you," said Monkey. "Merciful and pious my master may be, but he's a bit rough under his kindly manner. He'll be angry if I don't carry you with me. I'll do it if I must, but there's something I want to tell you first: warn me if you want a piss or a shit. If you do it down my back the stench will be more than I can stand. Besides, there's nobody to wash my clothes if they get dirty."

To which the demon replied, "Of course. I'm old enough to understand that." At last Monkey hauled the demon up on his back and hastened Westwards with the Tang Priest and Friar Sand. When the going became very uneven in the mountains Monkey walked slowly and carefully, letting the Tang Priest get ahead.

Before they had gone a couple of miles the Master and Friar Sand dropped out of Monkey's sight into a hollow on the mountainside. "The Master doesn't have any sense of how things should be done despite his great age," he grumbled to himself. "On this long journey I'd feel overloaded even if I were empty—handed. I wish I'd smashed this evil monster. I would have to carry him. Even he's not a monster but a good man he ought to die at his age. Why should I carry him? I'll fling him down and kill him."

The demon realized that the Great Sage was deciding to kill him so he used his power to shift mountains and made mountain—moving sea —overturning magic on Monkey's back. He recited the words of the spell, bringing Mount Sumeru flying through the air to come crashing down on Monkey's head. The Great Sage twisted his head to one side

in a flash, and the mountain landed on his left shoulder.

"Tell me, son," said Monkey, "what magic have you used to make yourself so heavy? You're crushing me. I don't mind the weight, but 'a badly – balanced carrying – pole is much harder to manage than a well – balanced one.'"

"A mountain's not enough to crush him," thought the demon, and he recited another spell to bring Mount Emei hurtling down through the air on Monkey's head. Monkey turned aside again, so that the mountain landed on his right shoulder. Just watch him as, with the two mountains on his shoulders, he hurries like a shooting star after his master. The monster broke into a cold sweat all over when he saw that Monkey could carry mountains. Then he pulled himself together recited another spell, and brought Mount Tai down from the sky on Monkey's head. By now the Great Sage was so weak with exhaustion that this mountain landing on his head pinned him down: his three corpse – spirits exploded, and blood spurted from his seven orifices.

When he had crushed Monkey with his magical powers the splendid evil spirit mounted a fast wind and caught up with Sanzang. The monster reached down from his cloud and made a grab for the Tang Priest as he rode his horse. Friar Sand threw down the luggage in horror and rushed forward wielding his demon – subduing staff to stop him. The evil demon raised his Seven – star Sword to face Friar Sand. It was a Chapter 33

fierce battle:

A sword of seven stars,

A demon – quelling staff,

Flash and gleam with golden light.

The one has glaring eyes, a black demon of death;

The iron – faced other is indeed a General of the Curtain.

Before the mountain the demon displays his powers,

Determined to capture Tang Sanzang.

His foe fights hard to save the worthy priest,

Ready to die before he lets him go.

Both belch fogs that Bide the heavenly palace,

And kick up clouds of dust to blot out stars.

The red sun pales before their battle,

Heaven and earth are thrown into confusion.

But after nine clashes yielding no result

Friar Sand, alas, is suddenly defeated.

The ferocious demon wielded his sword like a shooting star as he fought till Friar Sand was exhausted. Friar Sand turned to flee, but the monster parried his staff and brought a great hand wheeling round to grab him.

Tucking the friar under his left arm, the demon pulled Sanzang from his horse with his right hand, hooked their luggage with his toes, opened his mouth to get his teeth into the horse's mane, and used his magic to levitate them and carry them in a puff of wind back to the Lotus Flower Cave.

"Elder brother," he yelled, "I've got all the monks."

The older monster was delighted. "Bring them here; I want to see them," he said.

"These are the ones, aren't they?" said the younger.

"Brother," sighed the older monster, "you've got the wrong ones again."

"But you told me to get the Tang Priest," said the younger. "This is the Tang Priest all right," said the older monster, "but you still haven't caught that very powerful Sun the Novice. We can't eat the Tang Priest before we get him. Until we've got him we must on no account touch any of his people. That Monkey King has enormous magical

powers and can turn himself into all sorts of things. There's no way he'll let us eat his master. If he comes to our door looking for a fight you can forget all about a quiet life."

"Elder brother," said the younger monster with a laugh, "you're overrating him. From the way you're going on about how marvellous he is anyone would think that there were none like him on earth and few enough in the heavens. As I see it he's nothing special: he hasn't any powers."

"Did you catch him?" the elder demon asked.

"He can't move an inch," the other replied. "He's crushed under three mountains I dropped on him. It was only when I'd done that to him I collected the Tang Priest, Friar Sand, the horse and the baggage and brought them all here."

The news filled the old monster's heart with pleasure. "What luck! What luck! Now you've dealt with that wretched Sun the Tang Priest is as good as food in our mouths." Saying this the older monster ordered the young devils, "Bring wine at once, and give the Junior King a drink to celebrate his success."

"No, I won't have a drink," said the younger demon. "Tell the little devils to pull Pig out of the water and hang him up." Pig was then hung up in the Eastern wing of the cave, Friar Sand in the West, and Tang Priest in the middle. The white horse was sent off to the stables, and the luggage was stored away.

"You have great powers, my brother," said the older monster with a laugh. "You've caught the three monks twice. But even though you've crushed him under a mountain you'll need some magic to get that Sun into our cooking pot. That'll be the day."

"Please sit down, elder brother," said the younger monster. "I can get Monkey without lifting a finger. I just need to send two little devils with a couple of treasures to bring him back in."

"What treasures?"

"My gold and red gourd and your vase of mutton–fat jade." The older monster fetched the two treasures, handed them to him, and asked which two little devils were to be sent. "Send Dexterous Ghost and Skillful Beast," replied the younger monster. He then instructed them, "Take the two treasures straight to the top of a high mountain, put them there upside–down and call out to Sun. If he responds he'll go

straight inside. You must immediately paste this label on: 'Supreme Lord Lao: to be dealt with urgently in accordance with the Statutes and Ordinances.' Within three and a half hours he'll just be pus." The two little devils kowtowed and went off with treasures to catch Monkey.

As he lay crushed under the three mountains the Great Sage thought in his distress of the holy priest Sanzang.

"Master," he wailed, "I remember how you removed the paper sealing me under the Double Boundary Mountain, delivered me from terrible agony, and brought me into the Buddhist faith. The Bodhisattva ordered me to stay with you and improve myself, sharing you fate, your appearance, and your knowledge. I never thought I'd have this demon trouble here and be crushed by mountains again. Oh dear, oh dear. If you die it serves you right. But I do feel sorry about Friar Sand, Pig, and the little dragon who was turned into a horse.

Indeed:

Chapter 33

A tall tree invites the wind;

The wind then shakes the tree.

Whoever strives for fame

By fame destroyed is he."

Then he sighed and the tears flowed like rain.

All this had alarmed the mountain spirits, the local gods and the Protectors of the four quarters and the center.

"Whose mountains are these?" asked the Gold—headed Protector.

"Ours," said the local gods.

"And who is it pinned under your mountains?"

"We don't know," said the local gods.

"You lot wouldn't," said the Protector.

"It's Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who made havoc in the palaces of Heaven five hundred years ago. Now he's found religion and become the Tang Priest's disciple. Why ever did you let that demon use your mountains to crush him? You've had it now. He'll not spare you if ever he gets free. Even if he decides to let you off lightly it'll be exile for the local gods and hard labor for the mountain spirits. And I'll get a severe reprimand."

"We didn't know, really we didn't," said the gods and spirits, now terrified. "When the chief demon recited the mountain—moving spell we just moved them here. We never knew it was the Great Sage Sun."

"Don't be afraid," said the Protector. "The Legal Code says that you cannot be punished for what you are unaware of. We'll have to work out a plan to let him out in such a way that he won't kill us all."

"It would be very unfair of him to kill us if we set him free," said the local gods.

"There's something else you don't know," said the Protector. "He has a truly lethal As—You—Will gold—banded cudgel. If he hits you with that you've dead, and just a touch of it will wound. A tap will shatter your sinews, and a graze from it rip your skin to shreds."

The terrified local gods and mountain spirits then conferred with the Protectors, approached the gates of the three mountains, and called, "Great Sage, the mountain spirits, local gods and Protectors from the four quarters and the center have come to see you."

Splendid Monkey. He was like a tiger who though skinny was as always full of spirit. "So what?" he called in a loud, clear voice.

"We have a communication for the Great Sage," replied the local gods. "If we remove the mountains and set you free, Great Sage, will you forgive us humble spirits for our discourtesy?"

"Move these mountains," said Monkey, "and I won't hit you." Then he shouted, "Get up." It was just like the authorities giving an order: the

deities all said the magic words and the mountains went back to where they had come from. Monkey was free. He jumped up, shook the dirt off his body, tightened his kilt, pulled out his cudgel from behind his ear, and said to the local gods and mountain spirits, "All hold out your feet. I'm going to give you two strokes each to work off my bad temper."

"But you promised just a moment ago, Great Sage," said the deities in horror, "to forgive us. How can you go back on your word and hit us?"

"My dear local gods and mountain spirits," said Monkey, "you're more afraid of that monster than of me."

"But that demon has great and powerful magic arts! When he says his true spells he forces us to take it in turns to be on duty in his cave every day."

Monkey was shocked to hear them talk about being on duty. He looked up to the skies and shouted, "Heaven, Heaven, when the primal chaos was first differentiated and heaven divided from earth I was born on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. I visited many a wise teacher and learned the secrets of eternal life. I could change as swiftly as the winds, subdued tigers and dragons, and made great havoc in the palaces of Heaven.

But never did I bully mountain spirits and local gods or make them run my errands. What a disgrace, when these evil monsters have the effrontery to treat mountain spirits and local gods as their slaves, and make them take turns to serve them. Heaven! If you created me, why ever did you create them?"

Just as the Great Sage was in the middle of his complaint a rosy light began to shine in the mountain hollow.

"Mountain spirits, local gods," asked Monkey, "you serve in the cave, so what is it that's shining?"

"The monsters' treasures," replied the local gods, "some of the demons must have brought them to catch you out with."

"Just what I need to play a little trick on them," said Monkey: "Tell me, who comes to see them in the cave?"

"What they're interested in is refining elixirs of immortality, and their best friends are Taoist masters of the Quanzhen School," replied the local gods.

"No wonder he turned himself into an old Taoist priest to trick my master," said Monkey. "Very well then, I'll let you off for now. Back you go. I'll get them myself." The spirits all rose into the air and made off.

The Great Sage shook himself and turned himself into an old Taoist master. Do you know what he made himself like?

His hair drawn into two tufts,

A motley robe of a hundred patches.

He tapped a fisherman's drum,

A Lord Lu sash around his waist.

He leaned beside the path,

Awaiting the little devils.

Soon the devils arrived

To be prey for the Monkey King's tricks.

It was not long before the two little devils arrived. Monkey thrust his gold–banded cudgel out and tripped up the two demons, who were taken right off guard. It was only as they picked themselves up that they saw Monkey. "You villain. If our Great King weren't such an admirer of the likes of you we'd soon sort you out."

"What do you mean, sort me out?" asked Monkey with a forced smile. "We're all Taoists– –one big happy family."

"Why are you lying here, and why did you trip us up?" asked the devils.

"A little fall is a way for you boys to show your respect on meeting a Taoist elder like me," said Monkey.

"Our Great King only demands a few ounces of silver when people first meet him," said the little devils, "so why do you expect us to fall over

for you? That's not the custom here. You must be from somewhere else."

"Indeed I am," said Monkey. "I'm from Mount Penglai."

"But that's an island in the sea where immortals live," said the devils.

"If I'm not an immortal," said Monkey, "I don't know who is." By now the devils' anger had given way to delight.

"Venerable immortal," they said, "venerable immortal, please don't take offence at our rudeness. It was only because our common mortal eyes failed to recognize you."

"I don't hold it against you," said Monkey. "As the saying goes, 'An immortal body does not tread the common ground.' You couldn't be expected to know. I've come to your mountain today to bring over a virtuous man who has become an immortal and completed the Way. Anyone want to come with me?"

"I'll go with you, Master," said Dexterous Ghost.

"Me too," said Skilful Beast.

"Where have you two gentlemen come from?" asked Monkey, as if he did not know already.

"From the Lotus Flower Cave," they said. "Where are you going?"

"We are under orders from our Great King to capture Sun the Novice," the devils replied.

"Who?" Monkey asked.

"Sun the Novice," they repeated.

"The Sun the Novice who's going with the Tang Priest to fetch the scriptures?" asked Monkey.

"Yes, that one," the devils replied. "Do you know him?"

"That ape's outrageous," said Monkey. "I know him, and I'm very angry with him too. Let me come along with you and help you catch him."

"Thank you, Master," they replied, "but we won't be needing your help. Our Junior King used his magic arts to bring three mountains here to crush him. Now he can't move an inch. We two have been sent here with treasures to pack him into."

"What treasures?" asked Monkey.

"I've got the red gourd," said Dexterous Ghost, "and he's got the jade vase."

"How are you going to fit him into them?" asked Monkey.

"We'll set them upside down," said the little devils, "and call to him. If he responds we'll put him inside and stick on a label saying: 'Supreme Lord Lao: to be dealt with urgently in accordance with the Statutes and Ordinances.' Three and a half hours later he'll be just so much pus." This news shocked Monkey, who remarked to himself what a deadly plot this was.

"The Duty God of the Day told me that there were five treasures altogether," he thought. "These are two of them. I wonder what the other three are."

"Gentlemen," he said aloud, "would you let me have a look at your treasures?" Not realizing that this was a trick the two little devils produced them from their sleeves and offered them respectfully with both hands to Money. He was delighted, though he did now show it. "Splendid things," he thought, "splendid. I just have to flick my tail in the air and go whizzing off with a jump. They've given them to me." Then he had second thoughts: "No, that's no good. Stealing them would be easy enough, but it would destroy my reputation. It'd be daylight robbery." So he handed them back with the words, "But you haven't seen my treasure yet."

"What is it?" the devils asked. "Would you let us common mortals see it? It'd bring us luck."

The splendid Monkey put his hand down, pulled a hair from his tail, made a spell, and called "Change!" It turned into a big gold and red gourd one foot seven inches long that he produced from his waist. "Would you like to see my gourd?" he asked.

Skillful Beast took it, looked at it, and said, "It's a very big gourd,

Master, shapely, and very fine to look at, but it's useless."

"What do you mean, useless?" asked Monkey.

"Each of our treasures can contain a thousand people," the devils replied.

"What's so special about being able to contain people?" said Monkey. "Mine can hold the sky itself."

"The sky?" asked the devils.

"Yes, it really can," Monkey replied.

"You must be lying," said the little devils. "We could only believe that if we saw you do it. There's no way we're going to believe you otherwise."

"If the sky annoys me," said Monkey, "I pack it in here seven or eight times a month; but if it doesn't annoy me I might leave it alone for half a year."

"Let's see if he'll swap his sky—holding treasure with us," said Skilful Beast to the other demon.

"But he'd never swap his sky—holder for our one that can only hold people," replied Dexterous Ghost. "If he won't swap we can throw our vase in too," said Skilful Beast.

Concealing his delight, Monkey thought, "A gourd for a gourd and the vase too is two for one: I'll certainly agree to that." So he went up to Skilful Beast, clutched him, and asked, "Will you swap them if it can hold the sky?"

"Yes, we'll swap them as long as it can hold the sky," said the devil, "and I'll be your son if we don't."

"Very well then," said Monkey, "I'll put the sky in it to show you."

The splendid Great Sage bowed his head to make the spell and say the words of it. He called on the Patroller of the Day, the Patroller of the

Night together with the Protector of the Four Quarters and the Centre: "Report on my behalf to the Jade Emperor that I have now found the true faith and am escorting the Tang Priest to the Western Heaven to fetch the Scriptures. We are now hold up on a high mountain and my master is in dire distress. I want to trick the devils into swapping their treasures with me, so I most humbly beg that I be lent the sky to put away for an hour. This will enable me to succeed. If there's so much as a hint of a refusal then I'll be coming up to the Hall of Miraculous Mist to give battle."

The Patroller of the Day went straight in through the Southern Gate of Heaven to the Hall of Miraculous Mist, where he reported everything to the Jade Emperor.

"Outrageous ape," said the Jade Emperor. "This is insolence. Previously it was Bodhisattva Guanyin who persuaded us to release him to escort the Tang Priest. We sent the Protectors of the Four Quarters and the Centre and the Four Duty Gods to take it in turns to protect him. Now he wants to put the sky away. It can't be done."

As soon as he had said that the sky could not be put away Prince Nezha stepped forward from the officials at court and submitted a memorial: "Your Majesty, it is possible to contain the sky."

"How?" the Jade Emperor asked.

"When the primal chaos was first differentiated," Prince Nezha replied, "the light and pure became the sky, and the heavy and dirty became the earth. The sky is a ball of pure vapor that holds up the palaces of Heaven, and by rights it should be impossible to contain it. But now that Sun the Novice is escorting the Tang Priest to fetch the Scriptures from the Western Heaven this will be a source of blessings as great as Mount Tai, a good deed as profound as the ocean. Today we ought to help him succeed."

"How would you help him?" the Jade Emperor asked.

"I beg for the issue of an Imperial Edict to the Northern Gate of Heaven asking the True Martial God to lend us his Black Vulture Banner to spread outside the Southern Gate and block out the sun, moon and starts.

Down there they will be unable to see each other and not even able to tell back from white. That will fool the Chapter 33

devils into thinking that the sky has been packed into the gourd, and enable Sun the Novice to succeed." The Jade Emperor ordered that this suggestion be implemented. Bearing the imperial command Prince Nezha went to see the True Martial God at the Northern Gate of Heaven and tell him what had happened. The True Martial God handed the prince the banner.

By now a patroller had hurried down to whisper in the Great Sage's ear, "Prince Nezha is coming to help you."

Monkey looked up to see swirling clouds of good omen, a sure sign of the presence of a god, then turned to the little devils and said, "We'll put the sky away then."

"Put it away if you like," said the little devils, "but why all this playing for time?"

"I was just saying the spell and calling up the magic powers," said Monkey. The little devils gazed wide-eyed, wondering how he was going to put the sky away. Monkey threw his imitation gourd up into the air. It was only a hair really, so you can imagine how light it was. As the winds round the mountain peak caught it, it floated in the air for an hour before landing. Meanwhile Prince Nezha was noisily spreading the Black Vulture Banner out at the Southern Gate of Heaven, obscuring the sun, the moon and the stars. Indeed: Heaven and earth were dyed as black as ink;

The cosmos into darkness then did sink.

The two little devils were terrified. "When we were talking a moment ago," they said, "it was midday. How could it be dusk now?"

"When the sky is put away," said Monkey, "distinctions of time disappear. Of course it's murky."

"But why's it so dark now?"

"The sun and the moon and the stars have all been put inside, so there's no light outside. It's bound to be dark."

"Master," said the little devils, "where is your voice coming from?"

"I'm just in front of you, aren't I?" said Monkey. The little devils stretched their hands out and felt him.

"We can hear you but we still can't see you. Where are we, Master?"

"Don't fidget," said Monkey, hoodwinking them, "you're on the coast of the Bohai Sea. One slip and you'd fall for seven or eight days before hitting the bottom."

The little devils were panic－struck. "Enough, enough. Let the sky out again. Now we know how it's put away.

If you go on a moment too long and we fall into the sea we'll never get home."

Splendid Monkey. As they were both convinced he said another spell that had an impact on Prince Nezha, who rolled the banner up again, revealing the noonday sun once more. "Fantastic," exclaimed the little devils in delight, "fantastic. If we don't do a swap for this treasure we won't be looking after our family's interest."

Chapter 33

Dexterous Ghost handed over the gourd and Skilful Beast produced the vase. When they gave them both to Monkey he gave them his imitation gourd. The exchange had now been made, but Monkey wanted it to be final, so he plucked a hair from under his navel, blew a magic breath on it, and turned it into a copper coin.

"Boys," he said, "take this coin and buy a sheet of paper."

"Why?" they asked.

"We'll write a legal contract for the exchange of your two man－holding treasures for my sky－holder," said Monkey. "We each need a written agreement to prevent later regrets with the passage of time."

"But there's no brush or ink here to write a contract with," said the two little devils. "Let's swear an oath instead."

"What sort of oath?" asked Monkey. "

We exchange our two man－holding treasures for your sky－holder," said the devils, "and if we ever have any regrets may we be struck with pestilence in all four seasons."

"I certainly won't have any regrets," chuckled Monkey. "If I do, may I too be struck with pestilence in all four seasons." Having sworn his oath he leapt up, his tail in the air, and landed in front of the Southern Gate of Heaven, where he thanked Prince Nezha for helping him with the banner. The prince reported back to the palace and returned the banner to the True Martial God, leaving Monkey standing amid the stars and clouds, gazing at the little devils.

If you don't know how things turned out, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 34

The Demon King's Cunning Causes the Mind—Ape Trouble

The Great Sage Wins the Treasures Through Improvisation

With the imitation gourd in their hands the two little devils were quarrelling over who should examine it when they looked up and saw that Monkey had disappeared. "Brother," said Skilful Beast, "even immortals tell lies sometimes. He said that when we'd swapped the treasures he would make us into immortals. How come he's vanished without a word?"

"We got ourselves a very good bargain," said Dexterous Ghost, "and he would not dare disappear. Pass the gourd over—I want to put the sky in it and try it out." He tossed the gourd into the air, but it came crashing down again, to the distress of Skilful Beast, who asked, "Why won't it take in the sky? Could it be that it was Sun the Novice disguised as an immortal, and that he swapped an imitation gourd for our real one?"

"Nonsense," said Dexterous Ghost. "Sun the Novice is crushed under those three mountains. How could he possibly have got out? Pass the gourd over. I'll say the words of the spell he made and we'll put the sky inside." He too then threw the gourd up into the air, saying, "If there's so much as a hint of a refusal I'll be coming up to the Hall of Miraculous Mist to give battle." The gourd hit the ground before he could even finish saying the spell.

"The sky hasn't gone in," they both said, "it must surely be a fake."

Journey to the West

Up in the sky the Great Sage Sun Wukong could hear every word they said and see all that was happening while they made this commotion. For fear that they would go on too long and let the news out where it mattered he shook himself and put the hair that had been turned into a gourd back on his body, leaving both the little devils completely empty – handed.

"Give me the gourd, brother," said Dexterous Ghost.

"You give it me," said Skilful Beast. "Heavens! It's disappeared!"

They both started to search wildly on the ground and in the grass, putting their hands in their sleeves and in their tunics, but it was nowhere to be found.

"Whatever shall we do," said the two horror – struck little devils, "whatever shall we do? His Supreme Majesty gave them to us to catch Sun the Novice with. Now we haven't caught him and the treasures have disappeared.

We can't report this to him or he'll have us beaten to death. Whatever are we going to do?"

"Let's run away," said Skilful Beast.

"Where to?" asked Dexterous Ghost.

"Anywhere," said Skilful Beast, "because if we go back and say that we've lost the treasures that'll obviously be the end of us."

"No," said Dexterous Ghost, "don't let's run away. Let's go back. Both their majesties are usually very fond of you, and I'll put in a word for you. If they are prepared to make allowances they'll spare your life. Even if we can't talk them out of having us beaten to death, at least they'll do it there, and we won't be caught between two stools. Let's go back." Having made their minds up the two little demons set out back to their own mountain.

Monkey, watching them heading back from where he was up in the sky, shook himself and turned into a fly that flew down and followed them. Where, you may wonder, did he put his treasures now that he was a fly?

Had he left them on the path or hidden them in the grass someone might have found them and taken them, and all his efforts would have

been for nothing. So he kept them on his person. But a fly is only the size of a bean: how could he find room for them? Because those two treasures of his, like his gold – banded cudgel, were As – You – Will Buddha treasures that grow or shrink with you. That was why he could keep them on. He went buzzing along after the devils. Before long he was inside the cave, where the two demon kings were sitting and drinking.

The two little devils went up to them and knelt down. Monkey perched on the doorframe, listening. "Your Majesties," said the little devils.

"So you're back," said the Junior Demon King, putting down his cup.

"Yes," said the little devils.

"Have you got Sun the Novice?" was the next question. The two little devils banged their heads on the ground, not daring to reply. The old devils asked again, and still they dared not answer, but just kept banging their heads on the ground.

Only when they had been asked this several more times did they prostrate themselves and say, "Forgive us.

We deserve to die a thousand times. Forgive us. We were taking the treasures into the mountains when we Chapter 34

met an immortal from Mount Penglai. He asked us where we were going and we told him we were off to catch Sun the Novice. When the immortal heard about the Sun the Novice he said he was angry with him too, and wanted to come along and help. We never asked him to, but we told him all about how we were going to put Sun into the treasure. The immortal had a gourd too that the whole sky could be put into. Because we were greedy to do our family a good turn we swapped our man – holder for his sky – holder. At first we offered a gourd for a gourd, but then Skilful Beast threw the vase in for good measure. But his immortal's treasure was not for the mortal likes of us. We were trying it out when gourd and immortal both disappeared. We beg you to spare us the deaths we deserve."

At this the Senior Demon King thundered, "Damn it, damn it. It was Sun the Novice disguised as an immortal to trick them out of you.

That monkey has enormous magic powers and has knows people everywhere. What hairy little god let him out to con our treasures out of us?"

"Please calm yourself, brother," said the Junior Demon King.

"That ape is the bloody limit. With all those powers it should have been enough for him to escape. Why did he have to trick us out of our treasures? If I don't have the powers to catch him then I'll never be a monster on the road West again."

"How are you going to get him?" asked the Senior King.

"We had five treasures," said the Junior King, "so even after losing two we have three left with which we can and must capture him."

"What three treasures?" asked the Senior King.

"The Seven–star Sword and the Plantain Fan that I carry with me," the Junior King replied, "and the Dazzling Golden Cord that's kept at our old mother's place in the Crushed Dragon Cave in Crushed Dragon Mountain.

We should now send a couple of little devils to invite our mother to a meal of the Tang Priest's flesh and ask her to bring the Dazzling Golden Cord to catch Sun the Novice with."

"Which ones should we send?" asked the Senior King.

"Not rubbish like those two," replied the Junior King, who then shouted at Dexterous Ghost and Skilful Beast to get up.

"What luck," they said. "We weren't beaten and we weren't sworn at––we've been let off."

"Send for my regular attendants Mountain Tiger and Ocean Dragon," ordered the Junior King. The two of them knelt before him while he gave them his instructions. "You must be very cautious."

"We'll be cautious," they replied.

"And careful."

"We'll be careful," they replied.

"Do you know the way to our mother's home?" he asked.

"We do," they replied.

Chapter 34

"In that case go as soon as you can. When you get to the old lady's place bow to her very respectfully, then invite her to a meal of the Tang Priest's flesh and ask her to bring the Dazzling Golden Cord with her to catch Sun the Novice."

The two demons obediently hurried off, unaware that Monkey had heard every single word. He spread his wings and flew till he caught up with Mountain Tiger and settled on him. After about a mile he was going to kill the pair of them when he reflected, "Killing them would be no problem, but I don't know where the old lady keeps her Dazzling Golden Cord. I'd better question them before killing them."

Splendid Monkey! He flew buzzing away from the two little devils and let them get a good hundred paces ahead. He then changed himself with a shake into another little devil with a fox-skin cap and a tigerskin kilt worn upside-down, who hurried after them and called, "Wait a moment, travelers."

Ocean Dragon looked back and asked, "Where are you from?"

"My dear brother," Monkey replied, "don't you even recognize members of your own household?"

"You're not one of us," said the little devils.

"What do you mean?" said Monkey. "Take another look and see if you can recognize me."

"You're a stranger," they replied, "and we've never met."

"That's right," Monkey said, "you've never met me. I'm one of the outside staff."

"Well then," the little devils replied, "we would never have met you, sir. Where are you going?"

"His Majesty told me," Monkey said, "that he'd sent you two gentlemen to invite the old lady to a meal of the Tang Priest's flesh. You were to ask her to bring the Dazzling Golden Cord along to catch Sun the

Novice.

He's worried that you two would dawdle and misbehave yourselves and mess things up, so he sent me along too to hurry you up." As he knew all the details the two little devils were not at all suspicious: they believed that Monkey really was one of them. They rushed along in a great hurry for about three miles.

"This is too fast," said Monkey. "How far have we gone?"

"About five miles," said the little devils.

"And how much further is there to go?"

"Just to the black wood over there," said Ocean Dragon, pointing it out. Monkey looked up to see a dark stretch of woodland not far away. The old demon must live somewhere nearby, he thought; so he stopped to let the little devils get ahead of him, pulled out his cudgel, rushed after them; and took a swipe at their legs.

Unfortunately he hit them so hard that he turned the two little devils into mincemeat.

He hid himself deep in the undergrowth beside the path, pulled out one of his hairs, blew on it, said "Change!"

and turned it into Mountain Tiger. He turned himself into Ocean Dragon. Then the two imitation devils headed for the Crushed Dragon Cave to deliver the invitation to the old lady. Indeed: Great are the powers of the seventy – two transformations;

Chapter 34

Greatest of all is the art of improvisation.

With four or five bounds both of him was in the wood. He searched until he saw a pair of stone doors standing ajar. Not daring to charge in, he shouted, "Open the doors."

The little she – devil on the doors was so startled that she opened one of them wide. "Where are you from?" she asked.

"We've been sent from the Lotus Flower Cave on Flat – top Mountain

with an invitation for the old lady," said Monkey, and the little she－devil invited both of him in. When he reached the inner doors he peeped round them and saw an old woman sitting in the middle of the cave. Do you know what she looked like?

A map of snow white hair,

Star－shining bright.

A ruddy, wrinkled countenance,

Few teeth, and a majestic manner.

She looked like a chrysanthemum amid the frost,

With a face the color of old pine－trees after rain.

A white silk scarf was wrapped around her head,

And jewels studded her golden ear－rings.

When Sun the Great Sage saw her he did not go in, but covered his face with his hands and started to sob outside the inner doors. Do you know why he was crying? Could it be because he was afraid of her? But even if he had been afraid, crying would have been no use. Besides, he had tricked them out of their treasures and killed the little demons, so what did he have to cry about? He had never shed a single tear the time when he had been put inside nine cauldrons and deep－fried in oil for eight or nine days on end.

It was only the thought of the Tang Priest's suffering in his quest for the scriptures that upset him so badly that he wept as he reflected thus: "I've used my powers to turn into a little demon and come with an invitation for this she－devil. It wouldn't do for me to stay upright when I talk to her: I'll have to kowtow to her. In my life I've only kowtowed to three people: Lord Buddha in the Western Heaven, Bodhisattva Guanyin in the Southern Ocean, and the Master－－I kowtowed to him four times when he delivered me from the Double Boundary Mountain, and for him I'd wear out the six blades of my lungs and liver and the three hairs and seven apertures of my heart. But is it really worth banging my head on the ground before this she－devil for a roll of scripture? If I don't, I'll give the game away. This is terrible. I suppose it's only because the master is in trouble that I'll humiliate myself like this." As he had no choice he rushed in, knelt down, and announced that he was kowtowing to the old lady.

"Get up, my child," said the she – devil. Monkey was delighted that his announcement had worked. "Where are you from?" the old devil asked.

"I have been sent at the command of the two kings of the Lotus Flower Cave in Flat – top Mountain to invite you, Ma'am, to a meal of the Tang Priest's flesh. They also ask you to bring your Dazzling Golden Cord to capture Sun the Novice with." The old devil was very pleased indeed.

"What good, dutiful boys," she said, sending for her carrying – chair.

"Good lord," said Monkey to himself, "fancy a demon being carried in a chair." Two she – devils came up from behind with a chair made of fragrant rattan. They set it down outside the doors, then lifted the green gauze curtain. The old devil left the cave and got into the chair. Some young she – devils followed her with comb – boxes, mirrors and stands, towels and a scent box.

"What are all you here for? I'm going to visit my own sons, and there'll be no shortage of people to look after me there. I won't need you lot to fuss over me and natter. Go back in, shut the doors, and look after the place."

All the little demons apart from the two chair – porters did indeed go back in. "What are you two messengers called?" asked the old she – devil.

"He's called Mountain Tiger," Monkey quickly replied, "and I'm Ocean Dragon."

"You two take the lead and clear the way for me," said the old she – devil.

"Stinking luck," thought Monkey. "No scriptures yet, on top of which I've got to be her slave." As there could be no question of refusing he had to lead the way, chanting loudly, "Lift the chair!"

When he had covered a couple of miles or thereabouts he sat down on the edge of a precipice. When the chair – porters caught him up he

suggested, "What about a little rest? Your shoulders must be aching under the weight." Not realizing that this was a trick the little devils put the chair down. Standing behind it Monkey pulled a hair from his chest and turned it into a sesame bun that he ate as he held it.

"What are you eating, sir?" the chair–porters asked.

"It's a bit awkward to explain," replied Monkey. "We came a very long way to invite Her Highness, but as I've been given no food I'm hungry. When I've eaten some of these dry rations I brought with me we can be on our way."

"Give us a bit," the porters pleaded.

"Come over here, then," said Monkey. "There's no need to be too careful within the family."

Unaware of what was up, the little devils crowded round Monkey for a share of his dry rations, whereupon he produced his cudgel. The one he hit on the head was smashed to pulp when trying to ward the blow off; the other, who was only grazed, survived to groan aloud. Hearing these groans the old demon poked her head out from the chair to take a look. Monkey leapt round to the front of the chair and brought his cudgel down on her head, denting her skull and making blood and brains spurt out. Dragging her out of the chair for a good look he found she was really a nine–tailed vixen.

"Vicious brute," he said, "fancy you having yourself called 'Your Highness'. If you're a 'your highness' then you ought to address me as Supreme Ancestral Lord." The splendid Monkey King then found her Dazzling Golden Cord, and gloated as he tucked it up his sleeve, "Those lousy demons may have their magical powers, Chapter 34

but three of their treasure are mine now." He then pulled out two more hairs that he turned into doubles of Mountain Tiger and Ocean Dragon, as well as two more that he turned into the chair–porters. He then made himself look like the old lady, sat in the chair, and had it carried straight back the way he had come.

It was not long before they were at the entrance to the Lotus Flower Cave and the two hairs turned chair–porters were clamoring for the doors to be opened. The little devil on the doors asked whether

Mountain Tiger and Ocean Dragon were back.

"Yes," replied the hairs.

"Did you persuade Her Highness to come?"

"Can't you see her in the chair?" asked the hairs, pointing.

"Wait a moment while I report inside," said the little devil, who went in to announce, "Your Majesties, Her Highness is here." At this the two demon kings had a table of incense—sticks set out to greet her. Monkey was quietly delighted to hear all this.

"What luck," he thought. "It's my turn to do it in style now. I had to kowtow with the invitation to the old she—devil when I turned myself into a little devil. Now that I've turned myself into her I'm their mother, and they'll have to kowtow four times to me. It may not mean much, but at least I'll be a couple of kowtows up."

The splendid Great Sage got out of the carrying chair, straightened his clothes, and put the four hairs back on his body. The little devil on the doors carried the empty chair inside, and Monkey walked slowly in behind him, imitating the old she—devil's affected wiggles. As he went straight in devils big and small knelt in greeting. A drum and fife band started to play, and clouds of incense rose from the Boshan burners. On reaching the main hall he sat down, facing regally South, while the two demon kings kowtowed to him with the words, "Mother, your children kowtow to you."

"Get up, my children," said Monkey.

Pig, still hanging from a roof—beam, began to roar with laughter. "You're a fine one, brother," said Friar Sand,

"laughing while hung up."

"I know what I'm doing," said Pig.

"And what are you doing?" asked Friar Sand.

"I was afraid that when the old woman came we'd be cooked and eaten. But it's not her: it's the old story."

"What old story?" asked Friar Sand.

"The Protector of the Horses is here," said Pig.

"How can you tell?" asked Friar Sand. "When she leant forward and said, 'Get up, my children,' a monkey's tail stuck out behind her. I can see better than you because I'm hung up higher."

"Stop talking," said Friar Sand. "Let's listen to what they say."

"Yes, yes," said Pig.

Chapter 34

"Well, boys, why have you asked me here?" asked Monkey as he sat between the two demon kings.

"Mother," they replied, "we've been most discourteous to you for many days and not done our duty by you.

But this morning we captured the Tang Priest from the East, and we wouldn't dream of eating him by ourselves. So we invited you over to present him to you live. We'll cook him and offer him to you to eat: he'll prolong your life."

"I won't eat the Tang Priest's flesh, dear boys," Monkey replied, "but they do say that Pig's ears are delicious.

Could you cut them off and have them prepared? They'd go down well with a drink."

"A pox on you," exclaimed Pig in panic when he heard. "So you're here to cut my ears off. What I'll have to say won't make pleasant listening."

Oh dear! Because the idiot's remarks gave the game away the Monkey King's cover was blown. In burst a crowd of little demons, mountain rangers and doorkeepers to report, "Disaster, Your Majesties. Sun the Novice has killed the old lady and disguised himself as her."

The moment the demon kings heard this there was no time for arguments: the Seven–star Sword was brought out, and it cut straight at Monkey's face. The splendid Great Sage moved in a flash: the cave was full of red light, and he was gone. A trick like that really was fun: he could concentrate himself into solid form, or disperse into vapor. The Senior Demon King was out of his wits with terror, while all the other devils hit their fingers and shook their heads.

"Brother," said the senior king, "let's give the Tang Priest, Friar Sand, Pig, the white horse and all their baggage back to Sun the Novice and end the quarrel between us."

"What a thing to say," replied the Junior King. "Goodness only knows how much trouble we went to in our plan to capture all those monks. But now you're so intimidated by Sun the Novice's amazing transformations that you want to give everything back to him. You really are a coward. No man would act like that. You sit down and stop being so terrified. I've heard you tell of his tremendous magical powers, but I've never tried my skill against his although we did meet. Bring me my armor. I'm going to find him and fight three rounds with him. If he can't beat me in those three rounds then the Tang Priest will be ours to eat; and if I can't beat him we'll give him back the Tang Priest."

"You're right, brother," said the older demon, who then ordered that the armor be brought out. This was done.

When the Junior Demon King was fully accoutered he took his sword in his hand and went outside calling,

"Sun the Novice, where have you gone?" The Great Sage, who was now up in the clouds, turned round to look as soon as he heard his name called and saw that it was the Junior Demon King. This was how he was dressed:

The phoenix–helmet on his head outdid the winter snow;

His battle armor shone with the glint of steel.

The girdle at his waist was woven from dragon sinews;

Soft leather boots had folds like plum blossom.

A face like a living True Lord of Guankou,

A countenance no different from the Mighty Miracle God.

The Seven–star Sword was brandished in his fist;

Great was his wrath that rose to the clouds.

"Sun the Novice," roared the Junior King, "give back our treasures and our mother and we will free your Tang Priest to go to fetch the scriptures." The Great Sage could not restrain himself from abusing him:

"You revolting demon, you don't know what you're up against in me. Give me back my master, my brothers, the white horse and our baggage, and throw in some travelling expenses for our journey West too. If so much as the hint of a 'no' slips out between your teeth you'd better start making your own rope to save me the trouble of doing it myself."

On hearing this the Junior Demon King sent a cloud shooting up and sprang into mid – air, swinging his sword round to cut through Monkey, who struck at his face with his iron cudgel. The fight between them in the sky was magnificent:

Well – matched chess – players,

A general against a worthy foe.

A well – matched chess – player must show his mettle;

Only against a worthy foe can a general win glory.

When these divine warriors clashed

It was like tigers fighting in the Southern hills,

Or dragons struggling in the Northern seas.

Where dragons struggle

Their scales glisten.

When tigers fight

Claws and teeth wreak havoc.

The claws and teeth wreak havoc, falling like silver hooks;

The scales as they glisten are iron leaves.

The one twists and turns,

Performing a thousand maneuvers;

The other moves to and fro,

Never relaxing for an instant.

The gold–banded cudgel

Comes within inches of the skull;

The Seven–star Sword

Strives for a thrust to the heart.

The one strikes fear into the stars;

The other's wrath is more terrible than lightning.

The two of them fought thirty rounds, but neither came out on top. Monkey was delighted, though without showing it. "So this vicious devil is a match for my iron cudgel. As I've already got his three treasures I'm only wasting my time slogging it out with him like this. It'd be much better to pop him into the gourd or the vase. But that's no good," he reflected further. "As the saying goes, 'a possession is at its owner's disposal.' If they don't do what I tell them, everything will be ruined. I'll have to lasso him with the Dazzling Golden Cord."

Using one hand to parry the magic sword with his cudgel, the splendid Great Sage raised the rope in the other and sent it whistling through the air to lasso the demon king. Now the king had a Rope–tightening Spell and a Rope–loosening Spell. When he lassoed others he would say the tightening spell, and nobody would be able to get free, and if he lassoed his own people he would say the loosening spell, and no one would be hurt.

Recognizing this rope as one of his own family's treasures he said the loosening spell, at which the noose slid open. He got free and threw the rope back at Monkey, catching him. Before the Great Sage could apply some slimming magic to escape the demon had recited the tightening spell. Monkey was held fast, unable to free himself; he was locked tight by a gold ring at his neck. The demon jerked at the rope

and pulled him over, then struck seven or eight blows at his head with the magic sword. This did not even redden Monkey's scalp.

"If your head's that hard, you ape, I'll not hack at you any more," the demon said. "I'll take you back to kill later. Give me my two treasures back at once."

"I haven't got any treasures of yours," Monkey replied, "so why ask me?" The demon king searched him very carefully, found the gourd and the vase, and dragged him back into the cave by the rope.

"Brother, I've got him," he announced.

"Who?" the Senior King asked.

"Sun the Novice," replied the Junior King. "Come and see."

When the Senior King saw that it was Monkey his face was wreathed in smiles. "It's him," he said, "it's him.

Tie him to a pillar with a very long rope and we'll have some fun with him." And indeed Monkey was tied up Chapter 34

while the two demon kings went into the back hall for a drink.

Monkey's fidgeting at the foot of the pillar disturbed Pig. As he hung from his beam the idiot mocked Monkey: "So you didn't manage to eat those ears."

"Fool," said Monkey, "do you like hanging up there? If I get out I guarantee that I'll rescue you all."

"You're shameless," said Pig, "quite shameless. You can't escape yourself, and you want to rescue others. I've had enough. Let's all die with the master, then at least we'll be able to ask the way for him in the Underworld."

"Stop talking such nonsense," said Monkey, "and watch me get out."

"How?" Pig asked. While the Great Sage told Pig he was keeping a sharp eye on the two demon kings, who were feasting inside while little demons brought them dishes of food and jugs of wine. The two of them were staggering all over the place, and security was very

relaxed.

Seeing that there was nobody in front of him Monkey used his magic powers to slide his cudgel out. He blew on it and said "Change!" turning it into a pure steel file. Tugging at the ring at his neck he filed it apart with four or five strokes of the file, then removed the file, freed himself, plucked out a hair, turned it into a replica of himself, and left it tied up there. Then in a flash he changed into a little devil and stood beside it.

Up by the roof–beam Pig started to shout, "This is terrible, terrible. The one tied up is a fake. The genuine article is hanging up here."

The Senior Demon King put his wine cup down to ask, "Why is Pig yelling?" Monkey, now in the guise of a little devil, came forward to report, "Pig was inciting Sun the Novice to transform himself and escape. Sun refused to do so, and so Pig is yelling."

"Who said that Pig was well–behaved?" asked the Junior King. "Now we know just how cunning he is. He must be hit twenty times on the snout."

When Monkey fetched a rod to hit him with, Pig said, "Don't hit me hard, because if you do I'll start shouting again. I know who you are."

"It's only for your sakes that I'm making all these transformations," replied Monkey. "Why ever did you have to give the game away? None of the demons in the cave knew who I was. It would have to be you who found out."

"You may have altered your face," Pig replied, "but you can't change your backside. You have a patch of red on either cheek down there, don't you? That's how I know it's you." Monkey went through to the inner quarters, slipped into the kitchens, rubbed the underneath of a pan, smeared the soot on both his buttocks, and went back to the front part of the cave.

"Where's that monkey been messing around?" mocked Pig when he saw him. "His bum's all black."

Monkey was still standing in front of them, trying to steal their treasures. Being extremely wise he entered the main hall, tugged at the old demon's leg, and said, "Your Majesty, Sun the Novice is fidgeting around where he's tied to the pillar, trying to wear his way through the golden rope. It would be best to change it for a thicker one."

"You're right," said the Senior Demon King, taking off the belt of lion −hide he wore at his waist and handing it to Monkey, who used it to tie up the imitation Monkey. The golden rope he tucked loop by loop into his sleeve before plucking out a hair, blowing on it with magic breath, and turning it into a copy of the Dazzling Golden Cord, which he respectfully returned to the demon with both hands. The demon was too preoccupied with his drinking to look at it carefully as he accepted it. Thus it was that the Great Sage used his power of improvisation and turned a hair into the Dazzling Golden Cord.

Now that he had this treasure he bounded out of the cave as fast as he could, turned back into himself, and shouted, "You devils."

"Who are you, yelling like that?" the devils on the doors asked.

"Go inside at once and announce to your lousy demon kings that the Novice Sun is here." When the little devils passed on the message the Senior King was greatly shocked.

"We've captured Sun the Novice, so how can there be another Novice Sun?"

"He's nothing to be frightened of," said the Junior King. "We have all our treasures back. I'll fetch the gourd and put him inside it."

"Do be careful, brother," said the Senior King.

The Junior King went outside carrying the gourd to see someone just like Sun the Novice except that he was a little shorter. "Where are you from?" he asked.

"I'm Sun the Novice's brother," Monkey replied. "I've heard that you've captured him, which is why I'm here to have it out with you."

"Yes, I have got him," said the Junior Demon King. "He's tied up in the cave. As you're here you must want a fight, and I'm willing to cross swords with you. But do you have the guts to answer if I call your name?"

"If you call my name a thousand times," said Monkey, "I'll answer ten

thousand times."

The demon leapt into mid – air with his treasure, which he held upside – down as he called out, "Novice Sun."

Monkey did not dare reply.

"If I reply," he thought, "he'll have me inside."

"Why don't you answer me?" the demon asked.

"I can't hear you," replied Monkey, "I'm a bit deaf. Shout louder."

"Novice Sun," the demon shouted again. Down below Monkey pinched his own fingers as he thought things out: "My real name is Sun the Novice. Novice Sun is only a false name I've made up. With my real name I could be put in the gourd, but I reckon that with a false name I can't be." Unable to restrain himself any longer he replied this time. With a roaring of wind he was sucked into the gourd and the label was put on it. As it happened it made no difference to that treasure whether a name was real or false: any response was enough to get you put inside.

The Great Sage found it pitch – black inside the gourd. When he tried to raise his head he could not move it at all, so tightly was he squeezed in it. He now began to feel very anxious. "The two little devils I met on the Chapter 34

mountain," he thought, "told me that any one put in the gourd or the vase turns to pus in three and a half hours. Perhaps that's going to happen to me." Then he started on another line of thought: "No problem. I won't turn into pus. When I made havoc in the Palace of Heaven five hundred years ago Lord Lao Zi put me in his Eight Trigram Furnace and fired me for forty – nine days, and this gave me a heart and liver of gold, lungs of silver, a brazen head, an iron back, eyes of fire and golden pupils. I couldn't possibly be turned to pus in three and a half hours. I'll let him take me inside and see what he does."

Taking Monkey inside, the Junior Demon King said, "I've got him, brother."

"Who?" the Senior King asked.

"I've got the Novice Sun packed in my gourd," the Junior King replied.

"Do sit down, dear brother," said the Senior King, "and don't move. We must shake the gourd till we hear him sloshing around inside before taking the label off." Hearing this, Monkey wondered, "How could they shake my body till they heard it sloshing around? They wouldn't hear anything unless I'd turned runny. I'll take a piss, then if they shake me and hear is sloshing around they're bound to take the label and the lid off, and I'll be able to get the hell out of here. No, that won't do. Piss would sound right but it would get my tunic filthy.

When he shakes the gourd I'll have my mouth full of saliva that I can swish around noisily to fool him into opening up. Then I'll be off." The Great Sage got ready, but the demons were too thirsty for their wine to shake the gourd. So he thought of a way to trick them into shaking it.

"Heavens," he shouted, "my knuckles have turned to pus." But the demons still did not shake it. Then he shouted, "Mother, my waist has gone now."

At this the Senior Demon King said, "If he's turned to pus as far as the waist he's finished. Take the label off and let's have a look."

When the Great Sage heard this he plucked out another hair, told it to change, and turned it into half of his own body, which he left in the bottom of the gourd. He turned himself into a tiny insect that perched near the mouth of the gourd. As soon as the Junior Demon King took the paper cover off he flew out, did a roll, and turned into Ocean Dragon, the little devil who had gone with the invitation to the old lady. In this guise he stood beside the path while the Senior King removed the stopper from the gourd, craned his neck, and saw the half body still moving. Not realizing that it was a fake he called out in panic, "Shut it again, brother, shut it.

He hasn't rotted down yet." The Junior King put the cover back on. The Great Sage was discreetly delighted that they did not realize where he actually was.

The Senior Demon King took the gourd, filled a cup to the brim with liquor, and offered it with both hands to the Junior King, saying, "Please accept this drink from me."

"Elder brother," replied the Junior King, "I've drunk a great deal. I

can't accept another."

To this the Senior King said, "Your capture of the Tang Priest, Pig and Friar Sand was nothing special; but I insist on offering you some drinks to congratulate you on your achievement in tying up Sun the Novice and putting the Novice Sun into your gourd." As his elder brother was showing him so much honour and respect the Junior King would have to accept the cup. But he was still holding the magic gourd, and it would have been rude to accept the cup in one hand. So he passed the gourd to Ocean Dragon to allow himself to receive the cup with both hands, unaware that Ocean Dragon was Monkey in disguise. Just watch Monkey respectfully holding the gourd as he stands in attendance. When the Junior King had drunk the liquor he wanted to return the courtesy.

"No need," said the Senior King, "I'll drink one with you." They were both being very modest. Monkey held the gourd and fixed his gaze on the two of them as they lost count of how many drinks they were giving each other. He slipped the gourd up his sleeve, pulled out a hair, and turned it into an exact facsimile of the gourd that he offered to the kings. After giving each other so many drinks the two kings did not check its authenticity but simply took their treasure, went to their places, sat down, and carried on drinking. The Great Sage got away. He was very pleased at having captured the treasures.

"In spite of these demon kings' magic powers, the gourd is now mine," he thought.

If you don't know what he had to do to save his master and destroy the demons, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 35

The Power of Heterodoxy Oppresses the True Nature

The Mind – Ape Wins the Treasures and Beats the Demons

Lucid the true nature; the Way explains itself;

With one turn one jumps out of the net.

To learn transformations is very hard indeed;

To become immortal is no common deed.

Pure yields to foul and foul to pure as fate's wheel turns:

Break through the kalpas and travel freely.

Wander at will through countless billion years,

A spot of sacred light ever shining in the void.

This poem is an apt but indirect description of how wonderful the Great Sage's powers were. Now that he had won the demons' treasure and had it tucked into his sleeve he thought with delight, "The damned demon went to such a lot of trouble to capture me, but it was, as they say, like trying to fish the moon out of water. But for me to try to capture you would be like melting ice on a fire."

Concealing the gourd about him he slipped outside, reverted to his own form, and shouted at the top of his voice, "Open up, you devils."

"Who do you think you are, shouting like that?" asked the devils who were there.

"Tell your damned demon kings at once that Novice the Sun is here," he replied.

The demons rushed in to report, "Your Majesties, there's a Novice the Sun or something at the doors." The Senior King was shocked.

"This is terrible, brother," he said. "We've stirred up a whole nest of them. Sun the Novice is tied up with the Dazzling Golden Cord, and the Novice Sun is inside the gourd, so how can there be a Novice the Sun as well?

They must all be brothers and all have come."

"Don't worry, brother," the Junior King replied. "I can put a thousand people into my gourd, and at present I've only got the Novice Sun inside. No need to be afraid of Novice the Sun or whoever. I'm going

out to take a look and put him inside too."

"Do be careful," said the Senior Demon King.

Watch as the Junior King goes out through the doors with his gourd, as heroic and impressive as the previous time.

"Where are you from?" he shouted at the top of his voice, "and how dare you rant and roar here?"

"Don't you know who I am?" Monkey said.

"My home is on the Mount of Flowers and Fruit;

Long have we lived in Water Curtain Cave.

For making havoc in the Heavenly Palace

For ages did I rest from war and strife.

Since my delivery from woe,

I've left the Way and now I serve a monk.

As a believer I go to Thunder Shrine

To seek the Scriptures and come back to Truth.

Now that I've met with you damned fiends,

All of my magic powers I've had to use.

Give back to us the priest who's come from Tang,

To travel West and visit the Lord Buddha.

The rival sides have fought for long enough:

Let all of us now live in peace together.

Don't make old Monkey lose his fiery temper,

For if he does he'll surely wipe you out"

"Come here," said the demon. "I won't hit you. I'll just call your name. Will you answer?"

"If you call my name," said Monkey, "I'll reply. But will you answer if I call your name?"

"If I call you," said the demon, "I have a miraculous gourd that people can be packed into. But if you call me, what have you got?"

"I've got a gourd too," Monkey replied.

"If you have, then show me," said the demon.

Monkey then produced the gourd from his sleeve and said, "Look, damned demon." He flourished it then put it back in his sleeve in case the demon tried to snatch it.

The sight was a great shock to the demon. "Where did he get his gourd?" he wondered. "Why is it just like mine? Even gourds from the same vine are different sizes and shapes. But that one is identical." He then shouted angrily at Monkey, "Novice the Sun, where did you get your gourd?"

As Monkey really did not know where it was from he answered with another question: "Where did you get yours?"

Not realizing that this was a trick Monkey had learned from experience, the demon told the true story from the beginning: "When Chaos was first divided and heaven separated from earth there was this Lord Lao Zi who took the name of the Goddess Nuwa to smelt a stone to mend the heavens and save the Continent of Jambu.

When he put in the missing part of the Heavenly Palace he noticed a magic vine at the foot of Mount Kunlun on which this gold and red gourd was growing. It has been handed down from Lord Lao Zi to the present day."

Hearing this, Monkey carried on in the same vein: "That's where my gourd came from too."

"How can you tell?" the demon king asked.

"When the pure and the coarse were first divided," the Great Sage replied, "heaven was incomplete in the Northwest corner, and part of

the earth was missing to the Southeast. So the Great Taoist Patriarch turned himself into Nuwa to mend the sky. As he passed Mount Kunlun there was a magic vine with two gourds growing on it. The one I've got is the male one, and yours is the female one."

"Never mind about the sex," said the demon. "It's only a real treasure if it can hold people inside."

"Quite right," said Monkey. "You try to put me inside first."

The overjoyed demon sprang into mid－air with a bound, held out his gourd, and called, "Novice the Sun."

Without hesitation the Great Sage replied eight or nine times, but he was not sucked inside. The monster came down, stamping his feet, pounding his chest, and exclaiming, "Heavens! Who said that the world never changes? This treasure's scared of its old man! The female one hasn't the nerve to pack the male inside."

"Put your gourd away now," said Monkey. "It's my turn to call your name." With a fast somersault he leapt up, turned his gourd upside －down with its mouth facing the demon, and called, "Great King Silver Horn."

The demon could not keep quiet; he had to answer, and he went whistling into the gourd. Monkey then attached a label reading:

To the Great Lord Lao: to be dealt with urgently in accordance with the Statutes and Ordinances.

"Well, my boy," he thought with pleasure, "today you've tried something new."

He landed his cloud, still carrying the gourd. His only thought was to rescue his master as he headed for the Lotus Flower Cave. The mountain path was most uneven, and he was besides bow－legged, so as he lurched along the gourd was shaken, making a continuous sloshing sound. Do you know why this was? The Great Sage's body had been so thoroughly tempered that he could not be putrefied in a hurry. The monster, on the other hand, though able to ride the clouds

only had certain magical powers. His body was still essentially that of an ordinary mortal, which putrefied as soon as it went into the gourd.

Not believing that the demon had already turned to pus, Monkey joked, "I don't know whether that's piss or saliva, my lord, but I've played that game too. I won't take the cover off for another seven or eight days, by when you'll have turned to liquid. What's the hurry? What's so urgent? When I think how easily I escaped you deserve to be out of sight for a thousand years." As he was carrying the gourd and talking like this he was back at the doors of the cave before he realized it. He shook the gourd, and it kept making that noise.

"It's like a fortune–telling tube that you shake a stick out of," he thought. "I'll do one and see when the Master will be coming out." Watch him as he shakes and shakes it, repeating over and over again the spell, "King Wen's Book of Changes, Confucius the Sage, Lady of the Peach Blossom, Master Ghostvalley."

When they saw him the little devils in the cave said, "Disaster, Your Majesty. Novice the Sun has put his Junior Majesty in the gourd and is shaking it." The news sent all the Senior King's souls flying and turned his bones and sinews soft.

He collapsed, howling aloud, "You and I sneaked out of the world above to be reborn among mortals, brother.

Our hope was to share glory for ever as rulers of this cave. We never dreamt that this monk would kill you and part us." All the devils in the cave wept and wailed.

The sound of all this howling was too much for Pig hanging from his beam. "Stop howling, demon," he could not help himself shouting, "and listen to me. Sun the Novice who came first, the Novice Sun who came next, and Novice the Sun who came last all have the same name shuffled around, and they are all my fellow disciple. He can do seventy–two transformations. He got in here by changing, stole your treasure and put your brother inside it. Now that he's dead there's no need for all this misery. Have your cooking pots scrubbed clean and cook some gill mushrooms and button mushrooms, tea shoots, bamboo shoots, beancurd, gluten, Chapter 35

tree–fungus, and vegetables. Then you can invite my master, my

fellow—disciple and me down to say a *Life Sutra* for your brother."

"I thought Pig was well—behaved," roared the demon king in fury, "but he most certainly is not, mocking me like that." He then called on the little devils, "Stop wailing, and let Pig down. Cook him till he's nice and tender, and when I've had made a good meal of him I'll go out and take my revenge on Sun the Novice."

"Wonderful," grumbled Friar Sand at Pig. "I told you to keep your mouth shut. Your reward for blabbing will be to be cooked first."

The idiot was quite frightened by now. A little devil standing beside him said, "Your Majesty, Pig will be hard to cook."

"Thank heavens," said Pig. "Is this brother winning himself some merit? It's true I wouldn't cook well."

Then another little devil said, "He'll cook if he's skinned first."

"Yes," said Pig in desperation, "I'll cook. My skin and bones may be coarse, but they'll boil tender. I'm done for! I'm done for."

Before Pig had finished shouting a little devil came in from outside to report that Novice the Sun was there again and being very abusive.

"Damn him. He thinks we're completely useless," exclaimed the Senior Demon King with horror. "Hang Pig up again," he told the little demons, "and check what treasures we have left."

"We still have three in the cave," reported the steward devil.

"Which three?" the demon king asked. "The Seven—star Sword, the Plantain Fan, and the Pure Vase," replied the steward.

"The vase is useless," said the demon king. "All you used to need to do was to call someone's name and get a reply for them to be put inside. But now Sun the Novice has learned the words of the spell and put my brother in it. We won't need that— —leave it here. Fetch me the sword and the fan at once."

The steward immediately fetched them for the old demon, who tucked the fan inside the back of his collar and took the sword in his hand. Then he mustered all three hundred or more of his devils and drilled them in the use of spear, staff, rope and sword. The Senior Demon King then put on his helmet and breast plate, over which he threw a cloak of fiery red silk. The demons fell into battle formation, ready to

capture the Great Sage Sun. The Great Sage meanwhile, now aware that the Junior Demon King had rotted down inside the gourd, tied it up very tight and fastened it to his belt, then prepared to fight, his gold–banded cudgel in his hand. The old demon, his red battle–flag unfurled behind him, leapt out through the doors of the cave. This was how he was dressed:

Dazzling bright the tassels on his helmet,

Brilliantly coloured the belt at his waist.

The armor he wore was made of dragon scales,

Covered with a cloak of burning fire.

Lightning flashed from his glaring eyes,

Smoke curled up from his bristles of steel.

Lightly he lifted the Seven–star Sword,

His shoulders covered by the Plantain Fan.

He moved like clouds drifting from an island,

Sounded like thunderbolts shaking the mountains.

His mighty prowess would oppress Heaven's warriors

As he wrathfully led his devils from the cave.

He ordered the little devils into battle positions at once, then started hurling abuse: "Thoroughly ill–mannered ape. You've murdered my brother and ruined our fraternal love. You're utterly loathsome."

"Detestable monster," replied Monkey in kind. "You hang on to your devilish life for all you're worth, but how do you expect me to stand for my master, my fellow–disciples and horse all being hung up in your cave for no good reason at all? It's intolerable. Hand them over to me this moment and throw in some generous travelling expenses. Then I'll cheerfully be on my way and spare your rotten life." With no

more ado the demon lifted his sword and struck at Monkey's head, while Monkey raised his iron cudgel to meet him. It was a fine battle they fought outside the gates. Indeed!

The Gold – Banded Cudgel and the Seven – star Sword,

Flashing like lightning as they meet.

The chill wind from them makes one cold,

While mighty banks of cloud blot out the ridges.

One, moved by brotherly love,

Would do no act of kindness;

The other, out to save the pilgrim,

Showed no touch of mercy.

Chapter 35

The two sides seethed with equal hatred,

Each of them sharing the same loathing.

They fought so hard that

Heaven and earth were thrown into darkness,

Gods and demons were terrified,

The sun went pale in the dense smoke,

Dragons and tigers trembled.

One gnashed his teeth, as if filing nails of jade;

The other's glaring eyes burned with golden fire.

Moving to and fro they showed off their valour,

In an endless play of sword and cudgel.

When the old demon had fought twenty rounds with Monkey and neither had emerged the victor he waved the scabbard of his sword and called all his little devils forward. Over three hundred of them all rushed up and surrounded Monkey. The splendid Great Sage, quite unperturbed, used his cudgel to strike and parry to either side, before and behind. The little devils all had great skill, and they fought their way ever closer to him, tying him up as if in a tangle of silk floss as they tugged at his waist and legs. They would not retreat. The Great Sage was so alarmed by this that he used extra—corporeal magic. Plucking a bunch of hairs from under his left ribs he chewed thew to pieces that he blew out with the shout, "Change!" Every piece turned into another Monkey. Just watch as the biggest ones wield cudgels, the short ones use their fists, and the tiniest ones, with no other way of attacking grabbed knuckles and sank their teeth into muscles.

The little devils were put to rout. "Your Majesty," they yelled, "it's going all wrong. We're in terrible trouble.

The whole mountain and everywhere else is swarming with Sun the Novices." Now that his little devils had been thrown back by the extra—corporeal magic the demon king was hard—pressed; rush around as he might, there was to escape for him.

In his alarm the demon took his precious sword in his left hand and reached behind his neck with right hand to bring out the Plantain Fan. Then he turned towards the fire—gods of the Southeast and the Constellation Ligong he waved the fan. At once flames shot out of the ground, for such was the power of that treasure. The monster was truly ruthless. He waved the fan seven or eight times, setting great fires burning heaven and earth. It was a fine blaze:

Not a heavenly fire,

Nor a fire in a furnace,

Nor a fire on the mountain,

Nor a fire under the pot.

But the miraculous fire that comes from the Five Elements.

The fan is no ordinary object,

Nor was it fashioned by human skill:

It is a treasure made when Chaos was first parted.

The fire caused by this fan

Shines and dazzles

Like red silk lightning;

Burns and blazes

Like crimson gauze sunsets.

Not a wisp of smoke,

Only a mountain covered in flame,

Turning the pines on its ridges into trees of fire,

And the cypresses by its crags into lanterns.

The beasts in their dens, fearful for their lives,

Rush hither and thither;

The birds in the woods, to save their feathers,

Fly far and high.

The magic fire that roars up to the sky,

Destroys the rocks, dries up the streams, and makes all red.

The Great Sage trembled with fear at the sight of this evil fire. "This is terrible," he said. "It may do me no harm, but I can't save those hairs of mine. If they are caught by the fire they'll burn the way hair does."

So he shook himself and took the hair back on his body, leaving just one behind as a facsimile of himself.

Then, to avoid disaster by fire, his real self somersaulted upwards, reciting a spell to ward off the fire, and escaped from the inferno. He went straight back to the Lotus Flower Cave in the hope of rescuing his master.

He rushed to the cave doors, brought his cloud down to land, and found over a hundred little devils there with Chapter 35

smashed heads, broken legs, and open wounds. They had all been wounded by his magical other selves and were now standing there howling in agony. At the sight of them the Great Sage could not restrain his evil and murderous nature; he laid into them, swinging his iron cudgel. The poor devils, who were the fruit of so much hard work to acquire human form, became so many pieces of worn and hairy hide once more.

Having wiped out all the little devils the Great Sage stormed into the cave to free his master. Seeing more dazzling flames inside he was struck by a thought that filled him with panic: "That's done it. The fire's come in through the back door. There's no way I'll be able to rescue the Master." Terrified though he was, he looked more carefully and saw that it was not flames but a golden glow. Pulling himself together he looked inside and saw that the light came from a vase in "mutton – fat" jade.

"What a beauty," he thought with glee. "That's the vase that shone on the mountain when those two little devils were carrying it. I took it off them, then the demon king found it when he searched me later. Now I see that it shines when they keep it here too." Watch him as he takes such pleasure in stealing the vase that instead of rescuing his master he gets out of the cave as fast as he can. He was just outside when the demon king appeared from the South, brandishing his magic sword and the fan. Before the Great Sage could take evasive action the demon raised the sword and hacked at his face. But the Great Sage immediately soared into the air on a somersault cloud and disappeared without trace.

Back at the cave mouth the demon king was so distressed by the sight of the corpses of his spirits all over the place that he threw back his head and groaned, and could not help wailing loudly at the pain of it. This is proved by a poem that goes:

Wicked the ape, and stubborn the evil horse,

That had their souls reborn in mortal form.

Because in their folly they left the halls of Heaven

They forgot themselves and landed in these hills.

Woeful the swan that loses the flock;

Tearful the demon soldiers whose race is destroyed.

When will their sin be done and their bonds released

So that they may return to their heavenly home?

Overcome with remorse, the Senior Demon King sobbed at every step as he went into the cave. Although all the objects and furniture were still in the cave it was silent and deserted. It made him even more lonely and depressed. He sat alone in the cave, slumped on the stone table, the sword leaning against it, and the fan behind his neck again. Thus he drifted into sleep. Indeed:

Chapter 35

Happiness braces the spirit;

Sorrow just sends you to sleep.

The story goes on to tell how the Great Sage Sun turned his somersault cloud round and brought it to a stop in front of the mountain. As he wanted to rescue his master he fastened the vase securely at his waist and went back to the cave to reconnoiter. The doors were wide open, and the silence was unbroken, so he crept stealthily inside to find the old demon slumped against the stone table, fast asleep. The Plantain Fan stick out from his clothes at his shoulder, half covering the back of his head, and the Seven–star Sword was still leaning against the table. Monkey made his way forward very quietly, pulled the fan out, then turned and whooshed out. This was because the fan had rubbed against the monster's hair, waking him up. As soon as he looked up and saw that Monkey had stolen the fan he grabbed for his sword and went after him. By now Monkey was already outside the doors, the fan safely tucked in his belt and his iron cudgel in his hands as he met the monster's onslaught. It was a splendid fight.

The angry demon king,

Beside himself with fury,

Angry enough to swallow Monkey whole.

Unable to let off his rage,

Viciously he cursed the ape;

"You're always trying to fool with me.

You've killed so many of my people,

And you've taken away my treasures.

There'll be no mercy in this fight:

We'll see who's to survive."

The Great Sage yelled back at the demon:

"You haven't a lick of sense.

For a beginner like you to fight against me

Would be like trying to smash a rock with eggs."

The sword was met by the iron cudgel

As both sides fought without giving quarter.

In clash after clash they struggled for mastery,

Turning and twisting to show their skill in arms.

To rescue the pilgrim priest,

And visit the Buddha on Vulture Peak,

Metal and Fire would not yield to each other,

And the chaos of the elements destroyed their friendship.

As they showed their martial prowess and magic powers,

They sent stones and sand flying with their display of skill.

As they fought the sun was slowly setting;

The frightened demon was the first to quit.

After thirty or forty rounds of fighting against Monkey, by when the day was almost over, the demon king could hold out no longer and he broke away, defeated. He made off to the Southwest, heading for the Crushed Dragon Cave.

Monkey then brought his cloud down to land and rushed straight back into the Lotus Flower Cave, where he freed the Tang Priest, Pig, and Friar Sand. The three of them thanked Monkey for delivering them from dire peril, then asked where the demons had gone.

To this Monkey replied, "The Junior Demon King is inside the gourd, and I reckon he must have dissolved by now. I've just beaten the Senior King, and he's gone back to the Crushed Dragon Cave. As for the little devils from the cave, I killed half of them with my magical extra bodies, then wiped out the wounded survivors of the rout who came back here. That's how I was able to get in here to rescue you."

The Tang Priest thanked him no end: "I'm so grateful to you for your great efforts, disciple."

"You're telling me it was a great effort," laughed Monkey. "You lot only had to put up with the pain of being hung up, but I wasn't allowed to stand still for a moment. I was more rushed than a postal courier with an urgent message, having to charge around all over the place without stopping. I was only able to put the demons down because I stole their treasures."

"Show us the gourd, brother," said Pig.

"I think he must have dissolved by now." Monkey took the vase from his belt and then produced the Dazzling Golden Cord and the fan before bringing the gourd out in his hands.

"Don't look inside," he said, "don't. When he put me in there I tricked him into taking the lid off and letting me get away by swilling saliva round in my mouth. We absolutely mustn't take the lid off in case he plays a trick on us and escapes too." In their happiness master and disciples found the rice, noodles and vegetables in the cave, cleaned

up the stove and cooking pots, and made themselves a vegetarian meal. When they were full Chapter 35

they went to sleep in the cave. Nothing worth recounting happened that night, and before long the new day dawned.

The Senior Demon King meanwhile had gone straight to the Crushed Dragon Mountain, where he called together all the she – devils and told them how his mother had been murdered, his brother put in the gourd, the devil soldiers all killed and the treasures stolen.

At this the she – devils all wept. After they had been wailing for a long time he said, "Try not to upset yourselves. I still have my Seven – star Sword, and I'm going to parade all you women soldiers behind the Crushed Dragon Mountain, where I'll borrow some troops from my relatives. My mind is made up: I'll capture Sun the Novice and have my revenge on him."

The words were not out of his mouth before a little devil from outside the doors reported, "Your Majesty, your lord uncle from the other side of the mountains is here with soldiers." At this news the Senior Demon King quickly put on white mourning garments and went out to greet him in person. This lord uncle was King Septimus Fox, the younger brother of the demon king's mother, and he had heard from devils of his who were out patrolling the mountains how Monkey had killed his sister then impersonated her to steal his nephew's treasures and was fighting him in the battle of Flat – top Mountain that same day. Septimus Fox was bringing over two hundred of his own devil troops to help in the battle when he called for news at his sister's place on the way. As soon as he stepped inside and saw the demon king in mourning for his mother the two of them started to weep aloud. After weeping for some time the demon king bowed to him and told him what had happened. In his anger Septimus told the demon king to change out of his mourning clothes, pick up his sword, call the roll of women soldiers and join forces with him. They then set off on winds and clouds towards the Northeast.

The Great Sage had just told Friar Sand to get the breakfast ready as they would set off straight after eating it when he heard the sound of a wind. Going outside to look he saw a host of demon soldiers approaching from the Southwest. This alarmed him, so he ran back in

a hurry and shouted to Pig, "Brother, that evil spirit is back again with reinforcements."

Sanzang went pale with fright at the news. "Disciple," he asked, "what can this mean?"

"Don't worry," chuckled Monkey, "don't worry. Fetch me all their treasures." The Great Sage then tucked the gourd and the vase in his belt, put the Dazzling Golden Cord in his sleeve, stuck the Plantain Fan behind his shoulder, and whirled the iron cudgel around with both his hands. Friar Sand he ordered to stay put inside the cave guarding the master, while he asked Pig to come outside with his rake to meet the enemy.

When the demons' line of battle was drawn up King Septimus Fox took command. He had a jade face and long whiskers, a brow of steel and ears like swords. His helmet was of refined gold, he wore chainmail armor and he held a heaven–square halberd.

"I'll get you, you bold and impudent ape," he shouted. "How dare you treat people so badly? You've stolen the treasures, wounded my relations, killed the demon soldiers, and to top it all occupied their cave palace. All of you stretch your heads out to be executed while I avenge my sister's family."

"You hairy crowd, you misery–makers," replied Monkey, "you can't realize what powers I have. Don't go– –take this from my cudgel." The monster twisted round to avoid the blow, then struck back at his head with the heaven–square halberd. The two of them fought three or four rounds on the mountain–top until the monster was too weak to continue. He fled from the field, followed by Monkey until he was blocked by the Chapter 35

Senior Demon King. When these two had fought three more rounds Septimus Fox came back into the attack.

Seeing this from where he was at the edge of the battle Pig brandished his nine–toothed rake to stop him. The battle went on undecided for a long time with each fighter blocked by another until the demon king called up all the demon troops to surround Pig.

Sanzang meanwhile was sitting in the cave hearing the shouts and the

shaking of the ground. He told Friar Sand to go outside and see whether or not his brother was winning. Friar Sand raised his demon-quelling staff and charged out with a roar, putting the devilish horde to flight. Seeing that things were going badly, Septimus turned to flee, only to be caught a blow on the back from Pig's rake as Pig came after him. At this nine jets of blood gushed out of him, and the poor spirit's true being carried on ahead of him. When Pig grabbed him and tore off his clothes he saw that Septimus was in fact a fox spirit.

At the sight of his uncle being wounded the demon king broke away from Monkey and raised his sword to strike at Pig, who parried with his rake. While the two of them were fighting it out Friar Sand came up and struck at the demon king with his staff. This was more than the demon could cope with, so he set off on his wind and cloud, fleeing South with Pig and Friar Sand close on his heels. Seeing this the Great Sage at once went soaring up into the sky on his cloud. He brought out the vase to catch the old demon in.

"King Golden Horn," he shouted, and the old demon, imagining that one of his defeated little devils was calling, turned to reply. Into the vase he whistled, and Monkey put on a label reading: To the Great Lord Lao: to be dealt with urgently in accordance with the Statutes and Ordinances.

The Seven-star Sword fell to the ground, and it too was now Monkey's. "You've got the sword, brother," said Pig as he came towards him, "but where's the evil spirit?"

"He's done for," laughed Monkey. "I've got him in this vase." Like Pig, Friar Sand was delighted when he heard.

Now that all the evil spirits had been wiped out the disciples went back into the cave to tell the good news to Sanzang: "The mountain has been cleaned up and the demons no longer exist. Please mount, Master, and we'll be on our way." Sanzang was beside himself with joy. Master and disciples ate their breakfast, got their baggage and horse ready, and hurried on their way West.

As they were walking along a blind man suddenly appeared beside the path, went up to them, and seized Sanzang's horse.

"Where are you going, monk?" he asked. "Give me back my treasures."

"That's done it," said Pig with horror. "It's the old demon here to demand his treasures back."

When Monkey looked carefully and saw that it was the Supreme Lord Lao Zi he rushed up to him, greeted him and asked, "Where are you going, old fellow?"

The venerable elder at once rose up to his throne in the realm of jade, drew himself upright amid the nine mists and called, "Sun the Novice, give me back my treasures." The Great Sage rose into the air and asked.

"What treasures?"

"I use the gourd to keep cinnabar and the vase to hold water," replied the Lord Lao. "The precious sword I use for refining demons, the fan for fanning my fire, and the cord for tying round my gown. One of those two demons was a servant boy who looked after my golden furnace, and the other a servant who looked after my silver furnace. They stole my treasures and came down to the mortal world. I could not find them anywhere.

You have done a very good deed in capturing them."

"You're very rude indeed, old fellow," said the Great Sage. "You deserve to be charged with laxity for allowing members of your household to become evil spirits."

"Don't blame the wrong person," said Lord Lao. "It was nothing to do with me. It was the Bodhisattva from the sea who asked me for the loan of them three times, and sent them here to be turned into monsters to test whether your master and his disciples truly wanted to go to the West."

On hearing this the Great Sage thought, "That Bodhisattva is a terrible old liar. When she delivered me and told me to protect the Tang Priest on his journey to the West to fetch the scriptures I said that the journey would be tough and difficult. She promised to come and help me whenever things were really desperate. But so far from helping she's sent evil spirits to play me up and give me a hard time. The liar. She deserves to be an old maid all her life. If the old fellow hadn't come here himself I most certainly would not have given them back to him. But now that you've told me all this you'd better have them."

When the Lord Lao had his five treasures back he took the stoppers out of the gourd and the vase and tipped out two wisps of immortal vapor. As he pointed at them they turned into his two servants of the gold and silver furnace who waited on him on either side. Then a myriad rays of coloured light appeared and they floated back to the Tushita Palace and drifted straight on up to the Daluo Heaven.

If you don't know what happened afterwards, or how the Great Sage Sun protected the Tang Priest, or when they reached the Western Heaven, listen to the explanations in the next installment.

Chapter 36

When the Mind – Ape Stands Correct All Evil Causes Submit

When the Side – Gate Is Smashed the Moon Appears in Its Brightness
The story tells how Sun the Novice brought his cloud down to land and told the master and his fellow – disciples all about the Bodhisattva borrowing the two servant lads and Lord Lao recovering his treasures. Sanzang expressed his thanks at great length, then with great determination and pious sincerity prepared to head West for all he was worth. As he climbed into the saddle, Pig shouldered the luggage, Friar Sand held the horse's bridle, and Monkey cleared a path straight ahead down the mountainside with his iron cudgel. We can give no full account of how they slept in the rain, dined off the wind, were wrapped in frost and exposed to the dew. When they had been travelling for a long time they found the way forward blocked by another mountain.

"Disciples," shouted Sanzang from the back of his horse, "just look at how high and craggy that mountain is.

You must be very careful and on your guard; I'm afraid that monsters may attack us."

"Stop your wild imaginings, Master," replied Monkey, "and calm yourself. Of course nothing will happen."

"But why is the journey to the Western Heaven so hard, disciple?" asked Sanzang. "As I recall I have been through four or five years of springs, summers, autumns and winters since leaving the city of Chang'an. Why Chapter 36

haven't I got there yet?"

The question made Monkey chuckle: "It's early yet. We're not even out of the front door."

"Stop lying, brother," said Pig. "There's no such front door on earth."

"But we're still wandering around in the hall," said Monkey.

"Don't try to intimidate us by talking so big," said Friar Sand. "There couldn't possibly be a hall as large as this: there's nowhere you could buy roof–beams big enough."

"If you look at it my way, brother," said Monkey, "the blue sky is the roof tiles, the sun and the moon are the windows, and the Four Mountains and Five Peaks are the pillars and beams. Heaven and earth are just like a big hall."

"That's enough of that," said Pig. "Why don't we just stroll around for a while then go back?"

"Don't talk nonsense," said Monkey. "Keep going with me."

The splendid Great Sage shouldered his iron cudgel, calmed the Tang Priest down, and cleared their way forward through the mountains. As the master gazed at it from his horse he saw that it was a splendid mountain view. Indeed:

The towering peak touches the Dipper's handle;

The tops of the trees seem to reach the clouds.

From banked–up mists of blue

Comes the cry of the ape in the valley–mouth;

Deep in the turquoise shadows

Cranes call among the pines.

As the wind howls mountain sprites appear in the gullies,

Playing tricks on the wood–cutters;

Crafty foxes sit on the edge of rock–faces,

To the terror of hunters.

A splendid mountain,

Its every face towering and sheer.

Strange – shaped pines spread their bright green canopies;

Chapter 36

500

Journey to the West

From withered old trees hang vines of wisteria.

As spring waters fly through the air

The cold breeze cuts through and chills.

Where the crag towers aloft

A pure wind strikes the eye and startles the dreaming soul.

Sometimes the roar of the tiger is heard,

And often the songs of the mountain birds.

Herds of deer and muntjac make their way through the brambles,
Leaping and jumping;

River – deer and roebucks look for their food,

Rushing and scurrying.

Standing on the grassy slope,

No traveler can one see;

Walking deep in the hollows,

All around are jackals and wolves.

This is no place for a Buddha's self – cultivation,

But a haunt of birds and beasts.

The master trembled as he advanced deep into these mountains, his heart gripped with terror. Reining in his horse, he called out,

"After I grew in wisdom and took my vows,

His Majesty escorted me from the capital.

On my journey I met three wayward ones

To help me along as I rode in the saddle.

Over Hillside and gully I seek the scriptures,

Climbing many mountains to worship the Buddha.

Guarding myself as if behind a fence,

When will I return to visit the royal palace?"

Monkey's reaction to hearing this was to say with a mocking laugh, "Don't worry, Master, and don't be so anxious. Just take it easy and carry on. Besides, you're bound to succeed because you're such a trier." Master and disciples strode forward, enjoying the mountain scenery. Before they realized it the sun had sunk in the West. Indeed:

From the ten – mile pavilion no travelers leave,

In the ninefold heavens the stars appear,

On the eight streams the boats are all in harbor,

In seven thousand cities the gates have been shut.

From the six palaces and five departments the officials have gone; On the four seas and three rivers the fishing lines rest.

In the two towers the drum and bell sound;

One bright moon fills the earth and sky.

Looking into the distance the venerable elder saw many lines of towers and great halls, one behind another.

"Disciples," said Sanzang, "it's getting late now. Luckily there are those towers and halls nearby. I think they must belong to a Buddhist or

Taoist monastery or convent. Let's spend the night there and be on our way again in the morning."

"You're right, Master," said Monkey, "but be patient. Wait till I've had a look to see whether it's a good or an evil place." The Great Sage leapt up into the air and examined it very closely. It was indeed a Buddhist monastery. He could see

A tiled wall plastered with red,

Golden studs on both the gates.

Line behind line of towers, amid the hills,

Hall upon hall concealed within the mountains.

The Building of Ten Thousand Buddhas faces the Tathagata Hall, The Sunshine Terrace opposite the Hero Gate.

The seven – storied pagoda gathers night mists,

The three Buddha statues show their glory.

The Manjusri Tower next to the monks' dormitory,

The Maitreya Pavilion beside the Hall of Mercy.

Outside the Mountain Tower the green lights dance,

Purple clouds rise from the Void – pacing Hall.

The green of the pines joins the green of the bamboo,

All is purity in the abbot's meditation hall.

In quiet elegance the music is performed,

And all the streams rejoice as they return.

In the place of meditation dhyana monks teach;

Many instruments play in the music room.

On the Terrace of Wonder the epiphyllum flower falls,

Before the preaching hall the palm of scripture grows.

The place of the Three Treasures is shaded by the woods;

The mountains guard the Indian prince's palace.

Along the walls the burning lamps shine bright;

The air is thick with smoke from incense sticks.

Bringing his cloud down to land, Sun the Great Sage reported to Sanzang, "Master, it's a Buddhist monastery, and it will be a good place to spend the night. Let's go there." The venerable elder let his horse go forward again, and they went straight on till they were outside the monastery gate. "Master," asked Monkey, "what monastery is this?"

"It's most unreasonable to ask that," Sanzang replied, "when my horse has only this moment stopped and I haven't even had the time to take my foot out of the stirrup."

"But you've been a monk since childhood, venerable sir," said Monkey. "You were taught Confucian books before you studied the sutras and the dharma. You're very widely educated and on top of that you've been shown great kindness by the Tang Emperor. So how come you can't read those great big letters over the gate?"

"You stupid macaque," cursed the venerable elder, "you don't know what you're talking about. I was urging my horse Westwards and had the sun in my eyes. Besides, the letters are hidden by the dust. That's why I didn't see them." At this Monkey bowed, made himself over twenty feet tall, wiped the dust away with his hand, and invited his master to read them. There were five words written large:
IMPERIALLY FOUNDED

PRECIOUS WOOD MONASTERY. Monkey resumed his normal size and asked the master which of them was to go into the monastery to ask for lodging.

"I will," said Sanzang. "You are all so ugly, coarsely spoken, abrasive and overbearing that you might give the monks here such a fright that they refused to shelter us. That would be no good."

"In that case, Master," replied Monkey, "enough said. Please go in."

Sanzang laid down his monastic staff, removed his cape, neatened up his clothes, put his hands together and went in through the monastery gates. Behind red lacquered railings on either side two vajrapani guardian gods sat on high. These statues were both majestic and hideous:

One's iron face and steel whiskers seemed to be alive,

The other's scorched brow and bulging eyes were exquisitely carved.

On the left were fists knobbly like pig iron,

To the right were hands as rough as copper ore.

Their golden chainmail gleamed in the light,

Helmet and embroidered sash floated in the breeze.

Many worship the Buddha in the West;

Red glows the incense in stone tripods.

When Sanzang saw these statues he nodded, sighed and said, "If we had people in the East who could make big statues like these to burn incense to and worship I'd never have needed to go to the Western Heaven."

With more sighs he went through the inner gates of the monastery, where could be seen statues of Four Heavenly Kings, Dhrtarastra, Vaisravana, Virudhaka and Yirupaksa, set to the East, North, South and West to ensure the proper amounts of wind and rain. Once inside the inner gates he saw four lofty pines, each with a spreading canopy shaped like a parasol. He suddenly looked up to see the main Buddha hall. Placing his hands together in homage he prostrated himself before the images, then rose, walked round the platform on which the Buddha statues sat, and went out by the back door. He saw that at the back of the Buddha statues was one of the Bodhisattva Guanyin saving all beings in the Southern Sea. The craftsmanship was superb: there were figures of shrimps, fish, crabs, and turtles with heads and tails emerging from the composition as they leapt and played in the ocean

waves.

Chapter 36

The venerable elder nodded several more times, and sighed over and over again, "Oh dear! If all the creatures of scale and shell worship the Buddha, why is it that man alone will not live virtuously?"

As he sighed a monk came out through the innermost gate. Seeing Sanzang's remarkable and distinguished appearance he hurried up to him, greeted him courteously, and said, "Where are you from, reverend sir?"

"I have been sent by His Majesty the Tang Emperor," Sanzang replied, "to worship the Buddha in the Western Heaven and fetch the scriptures. As we have reached your illustrious monastery at evening I request that we be allowed to spend the night here."

"Reverend Sir," said the monk, "please don't be angry with, me, but it's not for me to decide. I'm just a lay brother who sweeps and strikes the bell and does menial duties. We have a reverend abbot inside who is in charge here and I'll have to report to him. If he allows you to stay I'll come out again with an invitation, but if he doesn't then I'm afraid I won't be able to waste any more of your time."

"Thank you for your trouble," said Sanzang.

The lay brother hurried inside to report to the abbot, who was also the superintendent of ecclesiastical affairs,

"There's someone outside, sir." The abbot rose, dressed himself in his miter and his vestments, and quickly opened the doors to let him in.

"Where is he?" he asked the lay brother.

"Can't you see him over there, behind the main hall?" the lay brother replied.

Sanzang, who was leaning against the gateway, was bareheaded and wearing a monastic habit made of twenty—five strips of cloth and a pair of dirty, water—stained Bodhidharma sandals. At the sight of him the abbot said to the lay brother, "You need a lot more floggings yet,

brother. Don't you realize that I hold high office in this monastery and only receive the gentry who come from town to burn incense here? How could you be so empty – headed as to ask me to receive a monk like that? Just look at his face. You can see he isn't honest. He's probably a wandering mendicant monk asking for lodging here because it's late. Our lodgings are not to be disturbed by the likes of him. He can spend the night squatting under the eaves. Why tell me about him?" With that he turned and walked away.

Sanzang, who heard all this, had tears running down his face. "Alas," he said, "alas. How true it is that 'a man away from home is dirt.' I have been a monk since I was a boy. I have never

'Absolved the dead when eating meat

Or thought of doing harm,

Or read the Sutras angrily,

Or reflected without calm.

Nor have I

Thrown roof tiles, or heaved a brick

To harm a temple building,

Or ever scraped from arhat's face

The very precious gilding.

Oh dear! Goodness only knows in what existence I did such harm to Heaven and Earth that I should always be meeting evil people in this one. Even if you will not give us a night's lodging, monk, why did you have to say such disgraceful things, and tell us to squat under the front eaves? It's a good thing you said nothing like that to Wukong. If you had he would have come in here and smashed your feet with his iron cudgel."

"Oh well, never mind," thought Sanzang. "As the saying goes, manners maketh man. I'll go in, ask him and see what he decides."

The Master walked in through the gate to the abbot's lodgings, where he saw the abbot sitting with his outer clothes off and seething with fury. Sanzang did not know from the pile of paper on his table whether he was reading scripture or writing out Buddhist pardons for somebody.

Not venturing to go any further in, Sanzang stood in the courtyard, bowed, and called aloud, "My lord abbot, your disciple pays his respects."

The monk, apparently very irritated that he had come in, barely acknowledged his greeting and asked, "Where are you from?"

To this Sanzang replied, "I have been sent by His Majesty the Great Tang Emperor to worship the living Buddha in the Western Heaven and fetch the scriptures. It was because I have reached your illustrious monastery at nightfall that I have come to ask for lodging. I'll leave before first light tomorrow. I beg, venerable abbot, that you will show me kindness."

Only then did the abbot make a slight bow and ask, "Are you Tang Sanzang?"

"Yes, I am."

"If you are going to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures, how is that you don't know the way?"

"I've never been here before," said Sanzang.

"About a mile and a half to the West is Ten Mile Inn," said the abbot, "where they sell food and you can put up for the night. It would not be convenient for you monks from far away to stay here."

"There is a saying, abbot," replied Sanzang, "that 'Buddhist and Taoist monasteries and convents are all rest—houses for us monks; the sight of the temple gate is worth a big helping of rice.' You can't refuse us.

What do you mean by it?"

"You wandering monks," roared the abbot in fury, "you've all got the gift of the gab, haven't you?"

"Why do you say that?" asked Sanzang, to which the abbot replied, "There's an old saying that goes, When the tiger came to town,

Every household shut its door.

Although he'd bitten no one yet,

Tiger's name was bad before."

"What do you mean, 'Tiger's name was bad before?'" asked Sanzang.

"Some years ago," the other replied, "a group of itinerant monks came and sat down at our gates. Seeing how wretched they were— —their clothes all torn, barefoot and bareheaded— —I was sorry for them being so ragged.

So I asked them into my quarters, gave them the best places to sit, provided them with a meal, lent each of them an old habit, and let them stay for a few days. Little did I imagine that the free food and the free clothing would put all thought of leaving out of their minds. They stayed for seven or eight years. Staying wasn't so bad, but it was all the terrible things they did."

"What terrible things?" asked Sanzang. "Listen while I tell you," replied the abbot,

"When idle or bored they threw bricks around,

Or tore out the studs from the monastery walls.

On cold days they burnt all the window—frames up,

Slept outside in summer on dismantled doors.

"They ripped up the banners to make themselves foot—cloths, Traded our incense and ivory for turnips,

Stole oil from the lamp that never goes out,

And gambled away all our cauldrons and dishes."

"Oh dear," thought Sanzang on hearing this, "I'm not a spineless monk like them." He was on the point of tears, but then thought that the abbot might mock him, so he discreetly dried them with his clothes, held back his sobs, and hurried out to see his three disciples.

At the sigh of his master's angry expression Monkey asked him, "Master, did the monks in there beat you up?"

"No," replied Sanzang.

"They must have," said Monkey, "or why else did I hear sobbing? Did they tell you off?"

"No," said Sanzang. "They did not tell me off."

"If they didn't beat you or reproach you, why look so upset?" asked Monkey. "Don't tell me it's because you're homesick."

"This is not a good place," said the Tang Priest.

"They must be Taoists here," said Monkey with a grin.

"You only get Taoists in a Taoist temple," retorted Sanzang angrily. "In a Buddhist monastery there are Buddhist monks."

"You're hopeless," said Monkey. "If they're Buddhist monks they're like us. As the saying goes, 'All in the Buddhist community are friends.' You sit here while I take a look around."

The splendid Monkey touched the gold band round his head, tightened his kilt, went straight into the main shrine—hall, pointed at the three Buddha statues and said, "You may only be imitations made of gilded clay, but you must have some feeling inside. I'm here this evening to ask for a night's lodging because I'm escorting the holy Tang Priest to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures in the Western Heaven. Announce us this instant. If you don't put us up for the night I'll smash you gilded bodies with one crack of this cudgel and show you up for the dirt that you really are."

While Monkey was indulging in this bad temper and bluster a lay brother responsible for burning the evening incense had lit several sticks and was putting them into the burner in front of the Buddhas. An angry shout from Monkey gave him such a fright that he fell over. Picking himself up he saw Monkey's face, at which he collapsed again, then rolled and staggered to the abbot's cell, where he reported,

"Reverend sir, there's a monk outside."

"You lay brothers really need more flogging," said the abbot. "I've already said they can squat under the eaves, so why report again? Next time it will be twenty strokes."

"But, reverend sir," said the lay brother, "this is a different monk. He looks thoroughly vicious, and he's got no backbone either."

"What's he like?" the abbot asked.

"Round eyes, pointed ears, hair all over his cheeks, and a face as ugly as a thunder god," said the lay brother.

"He's got a cudgel in his hand and he's gnashing his teeth in fury. He must be looking for someone to kill."

"I'll go out and see him," said the abbot. No sooner had he opened his door than Monkey charged in. He really was ugly: an irregular, knobbly face, a pair of yellow eyes, a bulging forehead, and teeth jutting out. He was like a crab, with flesh on the inside and bone on the outside. The old monk was so frightened that he fastened the doors of his quarters.

Monkey, who was right behind him, smashed through the doors and said, "Hurry up and sweep out a thousand nice clean rooms for me. I want to go to sleep."

The abbot, hiding in his room, said to the lay brother, "It's not his fault he's so ugly. He's just talking big to make up for that face. There are only three hundred rooms in the whole monastery, even counting my lodgings, the Buddha Hall, the drum and bell towers and the cloisters, but he's asking for a thousand to sleep in. We can't possibly get them."

"Reverend sir," said the lay brother, "I'm terrified. You had better answer him, however you will."

"Venerable sir," called the abbot, shaking with fear, "you ask for lodging, but our little monastery would be most inconvenient, so we won't be able to entertain you. Please spend the night somewhere

else."

Monkey made his cudgel as thick as a rice – bowl and stood it on its end in the courtyard outside the abbot's cell. "If it would be inconvenient, monk," he said, "you'd better move out."

"But I've lived here since I was a boy," the abbot said, "my master's master passed the monastery on to my master, who passed it on to my generation, and we'll hand it on in turn to our successors and our successors'

successors. Goodness only knows what he's up to, charging in here and trying to move us out."

"No problem at all, reverend sir," said the lay brother. "We can go. He's already brought his pole into the yard."

"Stop talking nonsense," said the abbot. "There are four of five hundred of us monks, old and young, so where could we go? If we went there would be nowhere for us to stay."

"If there's nowhere you can move to," said Monkey, who had heard the conversation, "you'll have to send someone out to take me on in a quarterstaff fight."

"Go out and fight him for me," the abbot ordered the lay brother.

"Reverend Sir," the lay brother protested, "you can't ask me to fight with a staff against a caber that size."

"You must," the abbot replied, adding, "'An army is built up for many years to be used in a single morning.'"

"Never mind him hitting you with that caber," said the lay brother, "it would squash you flat if it just fell on you."

"And even if it didn't fall on you and squash you," said the abbot, "with it standing out there in the yard you might be walking around at night, forget it was there, and give yourself a dent in the head just by bumping into it."

"Now you realize how heavy it is, reverend sir, how can you expect me to go out and fight him with my staff?" said the lay brother. This was how the monks quarreled among themselves.

"Yes," said Monkey, hearing all this, "you're no match for me. But if I

were to kill just one of you with this cudgel my master would be angry with me for committing murder again. I'd better find something else to hit as a demonstration for you." Looking and seeing a stone lion outside the doors to the abbot's room, he raised his cudgel and smashed it to smithereens with a single resounding blow. When the abbot saw this through the window the fright turned his bones and muscles to jelly. He dived under the bed.

The lay brother climbed into the cooking – stove and kept saying, "Sir, sir, that cudgel's too heavy, I'm no match for you. I beg you, I beg you."

Chapter 36

509

Journey to the West

"I won't hit you, monk," said Monkey. "I've just got a question for you: how many monks are there in the monastery?"

"We have two hundred and eighty – five cells all told," replied the abbot, shaking with fear, "and five hundred monks holding official ordination licenses."

"I want you to draw those five hundred monks up on parade," said Monkey, "get them dressed in long habits, and receive my master. Then I won't hit you."

"If you won't hit me, sir," said the abbot, "I'd gladly carry him in."

"Hurry up then," said Monkey.

"I don't care if the fright breaks your gallbladder, or even if it breaks your heart," said the abbot to the lay brother. "Go out and tell them all to come here and welcome His Grace the Tang Priest."

The lay brother had no choice but to take his life in his hands. Not daring to go through the front door, he squirmed out through a gap in the back wall and went straight to the main hall, where he struck the drum that was to the East and the bell that was to the West. The sound of the two together startled all the monks young and old in the dormitories on both sides.

They came to the main hall and asked, "Why are the drum and bell sounding now? It's too early."

"Go and change at once," said the lay brother, "then get yourselves into your groups under the senior monk and go outside the main gates to welcome His Grace from the land of Tang." All the monks then went out through the gates in a most orderly procession to greet him. Some wore full cassocks, and some tunics; those who had neither wore a kind of sleeveless smock, and the poorest of all who had no proper garment draped the two ends of their loin – cloths over their shoulders.

"Monks, what's that you're wearing?" demanded Monkey.

"Sir, don't hit us," they said, seeing his ugly and evil face, "let us explain. This is cloth we beg for in town. We don't have any tailors here, so these are paupers' wrappers we make ourselves."

Monkey laughed inside at this, then escorted them all out through the gates to kneel down. The abbot kowtowed and called out, "Your Grace of Tang, please take a seat in my lodgings."

Seeing all this, Pig said, "Master, you're completely useless. When you went in you were all tears and pouting so much you could have hung a bottle from your lips. How come that only Monkey knows tow to make them welcome us with kowtows?"

"Ill – mannered idiot," said Sanzang. "As the saying goes, even a devil's afraid of an ugly mug." Sanzang was most uncomfortable at the sight of them all kowtowing and bowing, so he stepped forward and invited them all to rise. They all kowtowed again and said, "Your Grace, if you would ask your disciple to show some mercy and not hit us with that caber we'll gladly kneel here for a month."

"You must not hit them, Wukong," said the Tang Priest.

"I haven't hit them," said Monkey. "If I had, I'd have wiped the lot of them out." Only then did all the monks rise to their feet. Leading the horse, shouldering the shoulder – poles with the luggage, carrying the Tang Priest, giving Pig a piggyback, and supporting Friar Sand they all went in through the main gates to the Chapter 36

abbot's lodgings at the back, where they took their seats in due order.

The monks all started kowtowing again. "Please rise, lord abbot,"

Sanzang said. "There is no need for any more kowtows, which are oppressive for a poor monk like me. We are both followers of the Buddhist faith."

"Your Grace is an Imperial Commissioner," the abbot replied, "and I failed to greet you properly. You came to our wretched monastery, but when I met you my mortal eyes did not recognize your illustrious status. May I venture to ask, Your Grace, whether you are eating a vegetarian or a meat diet on your journey? We would like to prepare a meal."

"Vegetarian food," replied Sanzang.

"And I imagine that these reverend gentlemen," said the abbot, "like to eat meat."

"No," said Monkey. "We are vegetarians, and have been all our lives."

"Good Heavens," exclaimed the abbot, "can even creatures like these be vegetarians?"

Then a very bold monk came forward to ask, "Sirs, as you eat vegetarian food, how much rice should we cook for you?"

"Mean little monks," said Pig, "why ask? Cook us a bushel." The monks then moved as fast as they could to clean the stoves and the cauldrons and serve food and tea in all the cells. The lamps were hung high and tables and chairs brought to entertain the Tan Priest.

When master and disciples had eaten their supper the monks cleared the things away. Sanzang thanked the abbot: "Lord abbot, we have put your illustrious monastery to great trouble."

"No, no," the abbot protested, "we have entertained you very poorly."

"May my disciples and I spend the night here?" Sanzang asked.

"Don't worry, Your Grace," the abbot replied, "we will arrange things." Then he called out, "Are there any lay brothers on duty over there?"

"Yes, reverend sir," a lay brother replied.

"Then send a couple of them to see to the fodder for His Grace's horse," the abbot instructed, "and have some sweep out and clean up the front meditation hall. Put beds in there for these venerable gentlemen to sleep in."

The lay brothers did as they had been told and arranged everything, then invited the Tang Priest to go to bed.

Master and disciples led the horse and carried their baggage out of the abbot's quarters to the meditation hall.

Looking in through the doors they saw the lamp burning brightly and four rattan beds set up at the ends of the room. Monkey told the lay brother who was looking after the fodder to carry it inside, lay it in the meditation hall, and tie up the white horse; the lay brothers were then all dismissed. Sanzang sat in the middle, right under the lamp, while the five hundred monks stood in their two divisions waiting upon him, not daring to leave.

"You may now leave, gentlemen," said Sanzang, bowing to them from his chair, "as we would like to go to sleep." But the monks dared not withdraw.

The abbot stepped forward and said to them, "Help Their Graces to bed, then leave."

"You have done that already," said Sanzang, "so you may all now go." Only then did they disperse.

On going outside to relieve himself the Tang Priest saw the moon shining in the sky. He called his disciples, Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand, who came out to stand in attendance. He was moved by the brightness and purity of the moon as it shone from high in the jade firmament, making all in heaven and on earth clearly visible. He recited a long poem in the ancient style in the moonlight with a nostalgic feeling. It went: A white soul hangs, a mirror in the sky,

Reflected whole in the mountain stream.

Pure light fills the towers of jade,

Cool air swirls round the silver bowls.

The same pure light shines on a thousand miles;

This is the clearest night of the year.

It rises from the sea like a frosty disk,

Hang in the heavens as a wheel of ice.

Sad the lonely traveler by the inn's cold window;

The old man goes to sleep in the village pub.

In the Han garden one is shocked by graying hair;

In the Qin tower the lady prepares herself for bed.

Yu Liang's lines on the moon are recorded by history;

Yuan Hong lay sleepless under the moon in a river boat.

The light that floats in the cup is cold and weak;

The purity shining in the court is strong and full of magic.

Chapter 36

At every window are chanted poems to the snow,

In every courtyard the icy crescent is described.

Tonight we share quiet pleasure in the cloister;

When shall we ever all go home together?

Having heard the poem, Monkey went up to him and said, "Master, you only know about the moon's beauty, and you're homesick too. You don't know what the moon's really about. It's like the carpenter's line and compasses— —it keeps the heavenly bodies in order. On the thirtieth of every month the metal element of its male soul has all gone, and the water element of its female soul fills the whole disk. That is why it goes black and has no light. That's what is called the end of the old moon. This is the time, between the last day of the old moon and the first of the new, when it mates with the sun. The light makes it conceive. By the third day the first male light is seen, and on the eight day the second male light. When the moon's male and female souls each have half of it, the moon is divided as if by a string. That is why it is called the first quarter. On the fifteenth night, tonight, all

three male lights are complete, and the moon is round. This is called the full moon.

On the sixteenth the first female principle is born, followed on the twenty – second by the second. At this stage the two souls are matched again and the moon is again divided as if by a string. This is what is called the third quarter. By the thirtieth the three female principles are complete, and it is the last day of the old moon. This is what is meant by 'prenatal absorption and refinement'. If we are all able gently to raise the 'double eight' and achieve it in nine by nine days, it will be easy to see the Buddha and easy to go home again too. As the poem goes:

After the first quarter and before the third,

Medicines taste bland, with all pneuma signs complete.

When it is gathered and refined in the furnace,

The achievement of the will is the Western Heaven."

On learning this the venerable elder was instantly enlightened and he fully comprehended the truth, and as he thanked Monkey his heart was filled with happiness. Friar Sand laughed as he stood beside them. "What my brother says is true, as far as it goes," he commented. "In the first quarter the male is dominant, and after the third quarter the female. When male and female are half and half the metal element obtains water. But what he did not say was this:

Fire and water support each other, each with its own fate;

All depend on the Earth Mother to combine them naturally.

The three meet together, without competing;

Water is in the Yangtze River, and the moon on the sky."

Hearing this removed another obstruction from the venerable elder's mind. Indeed: When reason fathoms one mystery, a thousand are made clear;

The theory that breaks through non – life leads to immortality.

Whereupon Pig went up to his master, tugged at his clothes, and said, "Pay no attention to all that nonsense, Master. We're missing our sleep. As for that moon, well:

Soon after it's defective the moon fills up again,

Just as at birth I too was incomplete.

They complain my belly's too big when I eat,

And say that I drool when I'm holding a bowl.

They are all neat and blessed by cultivation;

I was born stupid and have a baser fate.

You'll achieve the Three Ways of existence by fetching the scriptures, And go straight up to the Western Heaven with a wag of your tail and your head."

"That will do," said Sanzang. "Disciples, you've had a hard journey, so go to bed. I have to read this sutra first."

"You must be wrong, Master," said Monkey. "You became a monk when you were very young and know all the surras of your childhood by heart. Now you are going to the Western Heaven on the orders of the Tang Emperor to fetch the true scriptures of the Great Vehicle, but you haven't succeeded yet. You haven't seen the Buddha or got the scriptures. So what sutra will you read?"

"Ever since leaving Chang'an," Sanzang replied, "I have been travelling in such a rush every day that I have forgotten the scriptures of my youth. As I have some free time tonight I shall relearn them."

"In that case we'll turn in first," said Monkey. Each of the three of them went to sleep on his rattan bed while their master closed the door of the meditation hall, turned up the silver lamp, and opened out the scroll of scripture, which he silently read. Indeed:

When the first drum sounds in the tower the people are all silent.

In the fishing boat by the bank the fires have been put out.

If you don't know how the venerable elder left the temple, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 37

The Royal Ghost Visits the Tang Priest at Night

Wukong's Magic Transformation Lures the Boy

Sanzang sat in the meditation hall of the Precious Wood Monastery reading the *Litany of Emperor Wu of Liang* and the *Peacock Sutra* until the third watch, when he finally put the scriptures back into their bags. Just when he was about to go to bed he heard a rushing noise and the whistling of a fiendish wind. Fearing that it would blow out his lamp, the venerable elder shielded the lamp with his sleeve as quickly as he could. To his consternation the lamp kept going on and off. By now he was so tired that he pillowed his head on the reading desk and took a nap. Although he had closed his eyes and was dozing, his mind stayed wide awake as he listened to the howling of the devil wind outside the window. It was a splendid wind. Indeed, there were Soughs and whistles,

Much scudding away.

It soughs and whistles, carrying the fallen leaves,

Blows the clouds scudding away.

All the stars in the sky go dark,

And the earth is covered with flying dust.

Sometimes fierce,

Sometimes gentle.

When it blows gentle, pine and bamboo sound clear;

When it blows fierce, the lakes have turbid waves.

The mountain birds grieve, unable to reach their perches;

The fish jump restlessly in the ocean.

Doors and windows blow off the halls,

Spirits and demons glare in the side – rooms.

Chapter 37

515

Journey to the West

All the vases in the Buddha hall crash to the ground;

The glass lamp is shaken loose and the flame blows out.

Incense – ash scatters as the burner tilts,

The candles flare when their stand leans over.

All the banners and hangings are torn,

As bell and drum towers are shaken to their roots.

As the wind died down for a while, the elder in his dozy state heard a muffled call of "Master" from outside the meditation hall. He looked up, and in his dream he saw a man standing there soaking wet who was weeping and saying "Master" over and over again.

Sanzang bowed towards him from his seat and said, "You must be a fiend, or a goblin, or an evil spirit or a monster trying to trick me in the middle of the night. But I'm not one given to desire or anger. I'm an upright monk on a pilgrimage to the West at the command of the Tang Emperor of the East to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. I have three disciples who are all demon – quelling, monster – exterminating heroes. If they see you they will smash your body and bones to bits and pulverize you. But I am full of great compassion and will do what is expedient for you. Make yourself scarce this moment and never come into my meditation hall again."

The person stayed there and replied, "Master, I'm not a demon or a ghost or a fiend or an evil spirit."

"If you're none of these," retorted Sanzang, "what are you doing here in the middle of the night?"

"Take a good look at me, Master," he said. When Sanzang took a really careful look he saw to his surprise that On his head he wore a heaven – touching hat,

And round his waist a belt of blue – green jade.

Dragons and phoenixes danced on his ochre robe;

His no – worry shoes were embroidered with clouds.

The white jade scepter he held was arrayed with constellations.

His face was like the eternal Emperor of Mount Tai,

His form like Wenchang, god of officialdom.

Chapter 37

At the sight of him Sanzang turned pale with shock. He bowed at once and called out at the top of his voice,

"Which monarch are you, Your Majesty? Please be seated." He hurried over to support the monarch, only to find he was holding on to thin air. He looked again and saw that the man was still there.

"Your Majesty," said Sanzang, "which king are you? What country do you rule? I suppose that you must have fled here in the middle of the night because your country is in chaos or because you are being put upon by malicious ministers. Tell me your story."

Only then did the man tell what had happened, the tears streaming down his cheeks and his forehead creased with frowns. "Father," he said, "I live only some fifteen miles to the West of here, in the walled city where my dynasty was founded."

"What is it called?" Sanzang asked.

"I'm telling you the truth, Father," he replied. "When I established my regime I changed the name of the state to Wuji."

"But why is Your Majesty in this terrible distress?" Sanzang continued.

"Father," the other said, "there was a drought here five years ago so bad that no vegetation grew and the people were dying of starvation. It was appalling."

Hearing this Sanzang nodded and said with a smile, "Your Majesty, there's an old saying that Heaven favours a well – governed country. I expect that you were not merciful towards your subjects. Even if there is a famine you have no business to flee from your city. Go back, open up your granaries, and give the people relief.

Repent of your past sins and be good from now on. Pardon all those who have been wrongly condemned.

Heaven's heart will of itself be moved in harmony, and wind and rains will come as they should."

"But our granaries were empty," the other said. "We had no money or grain left. The salaries of the officials and the military were in default, and we were eating no meat with our royal meals. We followed the example of Yu the Great when he brought the waters under control, sharing weal and woe with our subjects, taking baths to purify ourself, fasting, burning incense and praying day and night. This went on for three years, but the drought continued to be so bad that the rivers and wells dried up. Just when the crisis was desperate a Quanzhen Taoist wizard came from the Zhongnan Mountains. He could summon wind and rain, and turn stones to gold with a touch. First he went to see our civil and military officials, and then he came to see us.

We invited him to come to the altar to pray, and he got results. Wherever he pointed his magic wand there would be a torrential downpour. We thought that three feet of rain would be sufficient, but he said that it would not be enough to restore fertility after so long a time and gave an extra two inches of rain. Seeing how generous he was we kowtowed to him and took him as our sworn brother."

"Then Your Majesty *is* extremely fortunate," said Sanzang.

"In what way?" the other asked.

"If that Quanzhen wizard has the powers to make it rain whenever you like and you can get him to turn things to gold at will, then what is so terrible that you have to flee here from your city?"

"We only ate at the same table and slept in the same room for two years. Then one spring day when the red apricot and the peach tree were in blossom all the gentlemen, ladies and princes went out to enjoy the beauty of the season. After the civil and military officials had returned to their offices and the royal spouses and concubines gone back to their quarters we were strolling hand – in – hand with

the wizard in the palace garden.

Chapter 37

When we reached the eight—sided well with a glazed—tile top he threw something into the well— —we don't know what it was— —that made it shine with golden light. Luring us to the edge of the well to look at this treasure he had the murderous notion of pushing us in with a splash and placing a flagstone over the top of the well. He piled earth over this then put in a plantain on top of it. So we have already been dead for three years, alas. We are the ghost of one who was wickedly murdered by being pushed down a well."

On learning that he was a ghost the Tang Priest felt weak all over, and his hairs stood on end. But he had to bring himself to continue his questioning. "Your Majesty, what you say is all wrong. If you have been dead for three years, why didn't the civil and military officials or your queens go looking for you when they attended court for audiences with Your Majesty?"

"Father," the ghost replied, "his powers are ones rarely seen in the world. As soon as he had killed us he shook himself and turned into an identical likeness of us. Now he is the master of our country, the secret thief of our territory. Our civil and military officials, the four hundred courtiers, the three queens and the consorts and concubines of the six compounds all now belong to him."

"You are a coward, Your Majesty," said Sanzang.

"How are we a coward?" the ghost asked.

"Your Majesty," said Sanzang, "even if the monster has the magic powers to turn into your double and steal your kingdom, undetected by your civil and military officials or by your queens and consorts, so that only you know the truth and you are dead, why have you not brought a case against him in the Underworld court of King Yama? There you could lodge a complaint and complain of the wrongs you have suffered."

"But his magic powers are so extensive and he is so well in with all the relevant officials," replied the ghost.

"He's always drinking with the city god, and he's connected with all the dragon kings. The Heaven—equaling God of Mount Tai is a friend of his, and all the Ten Kings of the Underworld are his sworn brothers. We have nowhere to turn if we want to bring a case against him."

"Your Majesty," said Sanzang, "if you are powerless to bring a case against him in the Underworld then why come to the world of the living?"

"Father," the other replied, "as a ghost of a man unjustly killed I would never have dared call upon you.

Outside the monastery gates are the Heavenly Kings who Protect the Law, the Six Dings and the Six Jias, the Protectors of the Four Quarters and the Centre, the Four Duty Gods, and the Eighteen Guardians of the Faith, all with their horses saddled up. It was only a magic wind created by the Patroller of the Night that brought me here. He said that my three years of suffering were due to end and sent me to pay my respects to you, Father.

He told me that your senior disciple is the Great Sage Equaling Heaven and that he is a very powerful killer of monsters and subduer of demons. I am here tonight to plead with you and beg you to come to my country, capture the evil monster, and expose his wickedness. We will be deeply grateful and repay you, Master, for your great kindness."

"Your Majesty," said Sanzang, "Have you come to ask that my disciple should go to rid you of this fiend?"

"Yes, that's right," the other replied.

"That disciple of mine is good for little else," said Sanzang, "but subduing demons and capturing monsters is right up his alley. The only thing is, Your Majesty, that even if he's given the job he may not be able to carry it out."

"Why not?" the ghost asked.

"Well," said Sanzang, "That fiend must have stupendous magical

powers if he can make himself so much like you that all the civil and military officials at court are happy with him and every one of the consorts and concubines in your harem is fond of him. Even though my disciple has some magic powers he should most certainly not resort to arms lightly. If he is captured and charged with high treason we will be thrown into jail.

Then everything will be ruined."

"But I still have someone I can trust at court," the ghost said.

"That's splendid," said Sanzang, "quite splendid. No doubt it's a prince or a high official who was sent off to command a garrison somewhere."

"No," replied the ghost, "it's my son the crown prince who lives in my own palace."

"But surely the crown prince must have been banished by that fiend."

"No, he hasn't been," the ghost replied. "He spends his time in the throne hall and the Tower of Five Phoenixes studying with learned scholars or sitting beside that wizard on the throne. For the last three years the crown prince has been banned from the queen's palace and prevented from seeing Her Majesty."

"Why?" Sanzang asked.

"It has all been planned by that fiend," said the ghost. "If the prince and his mother were to meet and start talking about things the truth would get out. He can only keep that throne if the two of them don't meet."

"Your troubles, like mine, must have been sent from Heaven," said Sanzang. "My father was murdered by pirates, one of whom seized my mother. Three months later I was born. I escaped with my life on the river and was rescued by my benefactor, the abbot of the Jinshan Monastery, who brought me up. I remember what it was like to be an orphan child, so I feel very sorry for a crown prince who has lost both his parents. But even though you still have your crown prince in the palace, how ever will I be able to see him?"

"What would stop you?" the ghost asked.

"If he is under such close control from the fiends," Sanzang replied, "that he can't even see his own mother, how will a mere monk like

myself get to see him?"

"He will be going out tomorrow," said the ghost.

"Why?" Sanzang asked.

"After tomorrow's dawn audience," said the ghost, "he will lead three thousand people riding out of the city with falcons and hounds to go hunting. You will certainly be able to see him. When you do, tell him everything that I have told you and he'll trust you."

"But he is only a mortal," replied Sanzang. "The fiend has him fooled in the palace, and he calls the fiend father several times a day. Why should he believe anything I say?"

"In case he doesn't I'll give you something that will be visible proof," said the ghost.

"What?" asked Sanzang.

Chapter 37

519

Journey to the West

The ghost set down the gold－bordered white jade scepter he was holding and said, "This will be proof."

"Why?" asked Sanzang.

"When the wizard made himself look just like me," the ghost replied, "there was one treasure he failed to copy. After he went back to the palace he said that the wizard has stolen it, and for the last three years it has been missing. If the crown prince sees it he will be reminded of me and I shall be able to take my revenge."

"Very well then," said Sanzang, "I shall keep it and send my disciple to sort things out for you. Will you wait for the crown prince there?"

"I dare not stay there myself," said the ghost. "I shall have to ask the Patroller of the Night to send another magic wind to blow me into the palace harem to appear in a dream to my first queen to tell her to co－operate with our son, with you, Father, and with your disciples."

Sanzang nodded and agreed. "Off you go then."

The ghost of the murdered monarch kowtowed to take his leave. Sanzang was just stepping forward to see the ghost out when he tripped and went sprawling, giving himself such a fright that he woke up. So it had all been a dream. In the dim lamplight he called, "Disciples!" with alarm.

"What's he going on about 'trifles, trifles' for?" muttered Pig as he woke up. "How happy I used to be in the old days. I was a real tough guy. I lived on nothing but human flesh and I always ate my fill of it. You would have to be a monk and make us protect you on your journey. You told me I'd be a monk, but now you treat me more like your slave. I have to carry your baggage and lead your horse all day, and empty your chamber–pot and lie at the foot of your bed to warm your feet by night. You never let me get any sleep. Why are you calling for me now?"

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "I had a strange dream when I dozed off with my head on the table just now."

"Master," said Monkey, springing to his feet, "dreams come from the imagination. You get frightened of demons before you've even started to climb a mountain. You worry if you will ever reach the Thunder Monastery as it's so far away; and you miss Chang'an and wonder when you'll ever get back there. That's why you're so full of anxieties and dreams. Now I'm sincere and single–minded about going to the West to see the Buddha: no dreams ever come to me."

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "this dream of mine was no dream of home. No sooner had I closed my eyes than a great wind blew up and a king appeared outside the doors of the meditation hall. He said he was the monarch of the land of Wuji. He was soaking wet and in floods of tears." Sanzang was just about to tell Brother Monkey all about the dream and everything he had been told in it.

"No need to tell me any more," said Monkey. "He came to see you in a dream and was evidently bringing me some business. No doubt some fiend has usurped his throne. I'll have it out with the fiend. I'm sure I'll succeed the moment my cudgel hits him."

"But he told me that the fiend has tremendous magic powers," warned Sanzang.

"Tremendous, my eye!" said Monkey. "As soon as he realizes that I've arrived he'll regret having nowhere to flee to."

"I remember that the king also left me a treasure as proof," said

"Don't talk such nonsense," replied Pig. "If you had a dream, that was that. Why all this chitchat?"

"'Don't trust what seems to be straighter than straight, and beware that kindness is not really unkindness,'" put in Friar Sand. "Let's strike a light, open the doors, and see what we can see."

So Brother Monkey opened the doors, and when they all looked outside they saw by the light of the moon and the stars that a gold—bordered white jade scepter was indeed lying by the side of the steps.

"What's this, brother?" asked Pig as he went over and picked it up.

"It's a treasure called a jade scepter that a monarch holds in his hands," said Monkey, "and it makes me believe, Master, that the story's true. I'll take full responsibility for capturing the fiend tomorrow. But there are three favours I'll want you to do me."

"This is great," said Pig, "really great. First you have a dream, then you have to tell him about it. He tricks people at every turn. Now he's asking you for three favours."

Going back inside, Sanzang asked, "What three favours?"

"Tomorrow I want you to suffer on my behalf, be put upon, and catch a fever," said Monkey.

"Any one of them would be bad enough," smirked Pig. "I couldn't possibly take on all three." Being an intelligent elder, the Tang Priest asked his disciple to explain why he wanted these three things done.

"There'll be no need for explanations," said Monkey. "Let me first give you a couple of things."

The splendid Great Sage plucked out a hair, blew a magic breath on it, called "Change!" and turned it into a box of red and gold lacquer into which he placed the white jade scepter. "Master," he said, "at dawn tomorrow you must put on your golden cassock and sit in the main

hall of the monastery reciting scriptures with the box in your hands while I go and give that city the once—over. If he really is an evil spirit I'll kill him, and that will be one more good deed to my credit. If he isn't, then we won't get ourselves into trouble."

"Excellent, excellent," said Sanzang.

"If the prince doesn't ride out of the city, that will be that," said Monkey, "and if he does leave the city as your dream predicted I'll definitely bring him here to see you."

"If he does come to see me, what shall I say to him?" asked Sanzang. "I'll give you a tip—off just before he comes," said Monkey. "I want you to open the lid of that box a little while I turn myself into a tiny monk two inches high, then take me into your hands with the scepter. When the prince comes into the monastery he's bound to worship the Buddhas. No matter how much he prostrates himself you are to pay no attention to him whatsoever. At the sight of you sitting there without moving he'll certainly have you arrested. Let him arrest you. Let him have you beaten, tied up or even killed if he likes."

"Goodness!" exclaimed Sanzang. "With all his military authority he might really have me killed, and that would be terrible."

"No problem," said Monkey. "I'll be there. If things get sticky I'll look after you. If he questions you, tell him that you are the imperially commissioned monk sent from the East to go to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha, fetch the scriptures and offer some treasures. When he asks you what treasures, tell him about the golden cassock and say, 'This is my third—grade treasure. I also have very fine treasures of the first and second Chapter 37

grade.' When he asks you about them tell him that in this box you have a treasure that knows everything that has happened or will happen for five hundred years in the past, five hundred years in the present era, and another five hundred years after that— —fifteen hundred years in all. Then let me out of the box and I'll tell the prince everything that you were told in your dream. If he believes me I'll go to capture the fiend. That will avenge his father and do our reputation a lot of good. But if he still doesn't believe you, show him the white jade scepter. My only worry is that he may be too young to remember it."

Sanzang was delighted with Brother Monkey's suggestions. "Disciple," he said, "this is a superb plan. When I talk about my three treasures I can call one of them the golden cassock and another the white jade scepter. But what shall I call the one you turn yourself into?"

"Call it the King–maker," said Monkey. Sanzang committed his instructions to memory. There was no way that the master and his disciples were going to sleep that night as they waited for the dawn. They only wished that by giving a nod they could make the sun rise, and blow away all the stars in the sky with a puff of breath.

Before long the Eastern sky did grow lighter. Monkey gave his parting instructions to Pig and Friar Sand:

"You mustn't disturb the monks or go rushing wildly about the place. As soon as we've succeeded in our mission we'll continue on the journey with you." No sooner had he taken his leave of them than he leapt up into mid–air with a whistling somersault. As he gazed due West with his fiery eyes he did indeed see the city.

You may wish to ask how this was possible. We were told before that the city was only some fifteen miles away, so he would have been able to see it from that great height.

Brother Monkey went for a close look and saw thick clouds of demoniacal fog hanging over it, as well as an abundance of evil winds and vapors of injustice. Up in the air Monkey sighed and said,

"Auspicious light would shine all around

If a true monarch now sat on the throne.

But black vapors hang over the gates of the palace

Now that a fiend has made it his own."

As he was sighing Monkey heard the clear report of a cannon. The Eastern gate of the city opened, and out poured a column of people and horses. It was indeed an impressive hunting party: Leaving the Forbidden City at dawn,

They fan out into the bush,

Their coloured flags bright in the sun,

White horses galloping into the wind.

Alligator – skin drums pound

Chapter 37

522

Journey to the West

As fencing spears clash together.

Ferocious the corps of falconers,

Martial the masters of the bounds.

Cannons shake the heavens,

While sticky – poles gleam red in the sun.

Each man carries a crossbow;

Everyone has a bow at his waist.

The nets are spread at the foot of the hills,

And snares are set along the paths.

With a noise more frightening than thunder

A thousand horsemen surround a bear.

The cunning hare cannot save itself,

And the crafty river – deer is at its wit's end.

The foxes are fated to meet their doom,

And death now faces the roebuck.

The mountain pheasant cannot fly away,

Nor can its cousin on the plain escape.

They have taken over the mountains to catch wild beasts,

And are destroying the forests to shoot the flying birds.

After they all left the city they ambled through the Eastern outskirts and before long they were on high ground some six miles away where

there was a military encampment. There was a very short general wearing a helmet, a breast plate, a sash round his waist, and eighteen metal plates. He held a blue–edged sword and sat astride a yellow charger. At his waist hung a ready–strung bow. Indeed: He was the image of a monarch,

With an emperor's noble visage.

Chapter 37

523

Journey to the West

His manners were not those of a petty man;

He moved like a true dragon.

As Brother Monkey looked down from mid–air he was delighted. "It goes without saying that he must be the crown prince. I think I'll play a trick on him." The splendid Great Sage brought his cloud down to land and charged straight through the soldiers till he was before the crown prince's horse. Then he shook himself and turned himself into a white hare that started to run around frantically in front of the prince's horse, to the delight of the prince when he spotted it. Fastening an arrow to his bow, he drew it and hit the hare with his first shot.

Now the Great Sage had deliberately made the prince hit him, and with the quickness of his hand and eye he caught the arrowhead, dropped its feathers on the ground beside him, and started to run. Seeing his arrow hit the jade rabbit, the crown prince gave his horse its head and galloped ahead of the field in pursuit. He did not notice that when his horse galloped fast Monkey went like the wind, and that when the horse slowed down Monkey slowed down too, keeping only a little distance ahead. Watch as he leads the prince for mile after mile until he has lured him to the entrance of the Precious Wood Monastery. Here Monkey turned back into himself. The hare was no longer to be seen. There was only an arrow stuck into the lintel. Monkey rushed inside and told the Tang Priest, "He's here, Master, he's here." Then with another transformation he turned himself into a tiny monk only two inches tall and squeezed into the red box.

Having chased the jade here as far as the monastery entrance the prince was most surprised when it disappeared and all that could be seen was an arrow fletched with vulture feathers stuck in the lintel.

"That's odd," he exclaimed, "very odd indeed. I'm quite sure that I hit the jade here. It can't have disappeared, leaving only my arrow here. I suppose that over the years the here must have become a spirit." Pulling his arrow out he saw the words ROYALLY FOUNDED PRECIOUS WOOD MONASTERY written large over the entrance.

"I remember," he said to himself. "Some years ago when my father was in the palace's throne hall he sent officials with gifts of money and silk for the monks here to build a Buddha hall with Buddha statues. I didn't expect to come here today; but, as they say,

To hear the monk's words when you pass a shrine

Is half a day's rest from the vanity of life."

The crown prince dismounted and was just on the point of going inside when his personal guards and the three thousand horsemen galloped up in a great crowd, all pushing and shoving to get into the monastery. Deeply alarmed, the monks all came out to kowtow in greeting and lead the prince into the monastery's main hall, where he worshipped the statues of Buddhas. When he raised his head to look around before taking a stroll along the cloisters to see the sights he noticed a monk sitting right in the middle of the hall. "What effrontery!" he exclaimed. "I, the crown prince, have come to visit this monastery in person today, and although the monks did not have to travel to meet me as they were not notified by royal decree, this monk should at least have got up when I arrived with all my army. How dare he carry on sitting there?" He then Chapter 37

ordered that the monk be arrested.

At the word "arrest" the officers standing to either side of the prince all seized Sanzang at once and got ropes ready to tie him up with. Monkey was now silently praying in his box: "Heavenly Kings who protect the dharma, Six Dings and Six Jias, I have a plan to subdue a demon, but this prince doesn't know what he's doing, and he's going to have my master tied up. You must protect him at once. If you allow him to be tied up you'll all be in trouble." None of them dared disobey the Great Sage's secret instructions, and they did indeed protect Sanzang. The officers could not even touch Sanzang's shaven pate; it was as if he were surrounded by a wall, and they could get nowhere near him.

"Where are you from, and how dare you insult me with this self−protection magic?" asked the crown prince.

Sanzang went up to him, greeted him respectfully, and said, "I have no self−protection magic. I am the Tang Priest from the East going to worship the Buddha, fetch scrip−tares and offer treasures in the Thunder Monastery."

"Your Eastern lands may be in the central plains," replied the prince, "but they are extraordinarily poor. What treasures could you possibly have? Tell me."

"The cassock I am wearing," said Sanzang, "is the third−grade treasure. I also have treasures of the first and second grade that are much better things."

"But that cassock only half covers you," objected the prince. "It can't possibly be worth enough to deserve being called a treasure."

"The cassock may not cover both shoulders," replied Sanzang, "but there is a poem about it that goes: Of course a monk's habit leaves one shoulder bare,

But it covers a true Buddha free from worldly dust.

This was the True Achievement of thousands of needles;

Nine Pearls and Eight Treasures formed its spirit.

Fairies and holy women sewed it reverently

As a gift to a dhyana monk to purify his body.

Failure to greet Your Highness may be overlooked,

But what use is a man who avenges not his father?"

Hearing this put the crown prince into a fury. "You're talking nonsense, you impudent monk," he shouted.

"You can use your gift of the gab to overpraise your tatty little garment if you like. But you'll have to tell me what wrongs to my father I've failed to avenge."

Chapter 37

Sanzang took a step forward, joined his hands in front of his chest, and said, "Your Royal Highness, how many great kindnesses does a man receive on earth?"

"Four," the prince replied. "What are they?" Sanzang asked. "There is the kindness that heaven and earth show by covering and supporting him," said the prince. "There is the kindness of the sun and moon in giving him light. There is the kindness of his monarch in giving him land and water. And there is the kindness of his parents who rear him."

"Your Highness is mistaken," said Sanzang with a smile. "People are only covered and supported by heaven and earth, lit by sun and moon, and provided with land and water by their monarchs. They are not brought up by fathers and mothers."

"Monk," roared the prince in anger, "you shaven-headed food-scrounging tramp, you rebel, where would people come from if they did not have parents to rear them?"

"That is something, Your Highness," said Sanzang, "that I do not know. But I have in this box here a treasure called the King-maker who knows everything that has happened or will happen for five hundred years long ago, five hundred years in the present era, and five hundred years in the future after that, making fifteen hundred years in all. He will be able to tell us all about not knowing the kindness of being reared by parents.

He has made me wait here for a very long time."

"Bring him out and let me see him," said the crown prince. As Sanzang opened the lid of the box Brother Monkey jumped out and started rushing around on both sides of it. "A tiny speck of a man like that couldn't possibly know anything," said the prince.

As soon as Monkey heard this objection to his size he used his magic powers to stretch himself till he was three feet four or five inches tall, to the amazement of the soldiers, who said, "If he went on growing at that rate it would only be a day or two before he smashed through the sky."

Once Brother Monkey was back to his original size he stopped growing. Only then did the prince address him:

"King—maker, this old monk says that you know all the good and evil things of the past and the future. Do you use tortoise—shell or milfoil for your divinations? Or do you do it by interpreting sentences from books."

"I don't use anything," said Monkey. "All I need is my three inches of tongue to know everything about everything."

"You're talking nonsense again," said the prince. "Even since the olden days the *Book of Changes* has been the best book for predicting the good and bad things that will happen in the world. It tells you what to avoid.

That's why predictions can be made with tortoise—shell or yarrow. Why should I believe a word you say?

You'll be making unfounded predictions of blessings and disasters to stir up trouble."

"Be patient, Your Highness," said Monkey, "until you've heard what I have to say. You are the eldest son of the monarch of Wuji. Five years ago there was a disastrous drought in your country that caused your people terrible suffering. The king your father and his ministers prayed devoutly for rain, but not a drop fell until a Taoist wizard came from the Zhongnan Mountains who could summon up winds and rain and turn stone into gold. Because the monarch was too fond of the wizard he took the wizard as his sworn brother. Is this all true so far?"

"Yes, yes," said the crown prince, "go on."

"When the wizard disappeared three years later who was then on the throne?"

"You're quite right that there was a wizard," said the prince, "and that His Majesty my father took him as his sworn brother. They slept in the same room and ate from the same table. Three years ago they were enjoying the beauty of the palace gardens when he used a gust of magic wind to seize my father's gold—bordered white jade scepter and carry it back with him to the Zhongnan Mountains. My father still

misses him. Without him my father has no interest in any relaxation, and the palace gardens have been completely shut for the last three years. If the king isn't my father I'd like to know who else he could be."

Monkey smiled, and kept on smiling without answering when the prince asked more questions. "Damn you,"

said the furious prince, "what do you mean by just grinning at me?"

"I have a great deal more to say," Brother Monkey finally replied, "but this is hardly the place to talk with so many people around." Realizing that there must be something behind this remark the prince dismissed his soldiers with a wave of his sleeve. The officers in attendance passed the order on at once, sending the three thousand soldiers and their horses to pitch camp outside the monastery gates. Now that there was nobody else in the hall of the monastery the prince took the best seat. The venerable elder stood beside the prince with Monkey standing next to him. All the monks of the monastery withdrew.

Monkey then stopped smiling as he stepped forward and said. "Your Highness, it was in fact your very own parent that was carried away by the wind, and it is the rain—making wizard who now sits on the throne."

"Nonsense," said the prince, "nonsense. Ever since the wizard went away my father has kept the weather well regulated, the country strong and the people contented. But you say that he isn't my father. As I'm of such tender years I'll spare you; but if His Majesty my father heard you uttering such treason he'd have you arrested and hacked into ten thousand pieces." He then shouted at Monkey to go away.

"What did I say?" Monkey asked the Tang Priest. "I said he won't believe me. Oh, well. The only thing I can do now is to give him that treasure in the hope of obtaining a passport so that we can carry on towards the Western Heaven." Sanzang handed the red box to Monkey, who took it, shook himself, made it disappear——it was, after all, one of his own hairs transformed——and put it back on his body. He then presented the white jade scepter with both hands to the prince.

"A splendid monk you are, I must say," exclaimed the crown prince on seeing it. "Five years ago you came here as a Quanzhen wizard to trick my family out of its treasure, and now you've come back as a Buddhist monk to present it to me."

"Arrest him," the prince shouted, and as the order was passed on Sanzang pointed to Monkey in his terror and panic and said, "You wretched Protector of the Horses. All you can do is cause gratuitous trouble in which you get me involved." Monkey rushed forward to stop him.

"Shut up," he said, "or you'll give the game away. I'm not called King −maker. I have a real name."

"Come here," shouted the angry crown prince. "I want your real name so that I can hand you over to the legal authorities for sentence."

"I am this elder's senior disciple," said Monkey. "My name is Sun Wukong. As I'm going with my master on his way to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven, we took shelter here last night. My master was reading sutras late last night, and he had a dream in the third watch. In this dream His Majesty your father told my master that the wizard had murdered him by pushing him into the eight −sided well with glazed tiles in the palace gardens. The wizard then turned himself into such a good likeness of your father that none of the officials at court could tell the difference. You were too young to know any better and banned from the harem.

The garden was closed. This was because he was afraid that the truth would get out. His Majesty your father Chapter 37

came last night specially to ask me to put the fiend down. I was worried in case the present king wasn't really an evil spirit, but when I took a look from up in the air I saw that he definitely is. I was just going to grab him when you rode out of the city to go hunting. The jade hare you hit with your arrow was me. I led you to this monastery to meet my master. Every word I have told you is the truth. You can recognize that white jade scepter; so why don't you bow in gratitude to the father who reared you and avenge him?"

At these words the crown prince was deeply distressed, and he said to himself in his grief, "Perhaps I shouldn't believe what he says, but it does seem to be rather convincing. But if I do believe him, however can I face my father in the palace?" He was indeed

Caught upon the horns of a dilemma,

Wondering what on earth he ought to do.

Seeing that he was unable to make up his mind, Monkey went up to him and said, "No need for all these doubts, Your Highness. Why don't you ride back to the capital and ask Her Majesty the queen how the love between her and your father is compared with three years ago. That's the only question that will prove that I'm telling the truth."

That changed the prince's mind for him. "That's it," he said, "I'll ask my mother." He sprang to his feet, put the scepter in his sleeve and was just about to go when Monkey tugged at his clothes and said, "If all your men and horses go back it'll give the game away and make it much harder for me to succeed. You must ride back alone and not draw attention to yourself or make a fuss. Don't go in through the main gate; use one of the back gates instead. And when you enter the women's quarters in the palace to see your mother, don't shout or make a lot of noise. You must keep your voice down and talk very quietly. That fiend probably has tremendous magical powers, and once the cat is out of the bag your mum's life won't be worth tuppence."

The crown prince accepted these instructions with great respect, then went outside the monastery gates to give these orders to his officers: "Stay encamped here and do not move. I have some business to attend to. Wait till I come back and then we shall all return to the capital together." Watch him: Giving his orders to the army to encamp,

He rides back to the city as if on wings.

If you don't know what was said when he met the queen, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 38

Questioning His Mother, the Boy Sorts Right from Wrong

When Metal and Wood Join in the Mystery, Truth and Falsehood Are Clear Chapter 38

If you speak only of the causation arising from birth,

You can be present at the Buddha's assembly.

The Buddha of the dusty world thinks only peaceful thoughts;

People of all quarters watch while the spirit is subdued.

If you wish to know who is the true monarch,

You must ask the mother who bore you.

You have never yet seen another world;

At every step a new flower appears.

Soon after taking his leave of the Great Sage, the crown prince of Wuji was back in the city. As instructed, he did not make for the main palace gates or announce his arrival, but went straight to a back gate that was kept by some eunuchs. Not daring to stop him, they let him in. The splendid prince rode his horse straight to the foot of the Brocade Fragrance Pavilion, in which sat the queen attended by some dozens of consorts and concubines holding fans. The queen was in tears, leaning against a carved balustrade. Do you know why? It was because she half remembered but had half forgotten a dream she had had in the small hours of the morning. Now she was deep in thought.

The prince dismounted, knelt at the foot of the pavilion and called, "Mother."

The queen forced herself to look cheerful and called to him, "What a pleasure to see you, my child, what a pleasure. I've been worried about you for two or three years. Despite all my requests to His Majesty your father in the hall of audience I haven't been able to see you. How ever were you able to get leave to see me today? I'm so, so happy. But why do you sound so sad, child? Your father is getting on now. One day the dragon will have to return to the jade–green sea and the phoenix to the crimson clouds. Then the throne will be yours. So why be so miserable?"

To this the prince replied with a kowtow, "Mother, who is it who now occupies the throne? Who is it who uses the royal 'we?'"

"The boy's gone mad," exclaimed the queen. "It's your father who's king. Why do you ask?"

"I beg you, Mother," said the prince, kowtowing again, "to forgive your son's crime so that I may ask once more. If you can't pardon me, I can't ask."

"There can't be criminal proceedings between mother and son," the queen said. "You're forgiven. Now, hurry up and ask."

"Mother," said the prince, "I want to ask you whether there is any difference in the affection between you and my father now compared with three years ago."

Chapter 38

529

Journey to the West

The moment the queen heard this her souls went flying and she rushed down to the foot of the pavilion to hug the prince close to her. "Child," she said as tears flowed from her eyes, "why do you come to the harem after we've been kept apart for such a long time to ask me this?"

"Mother," said the prince in great anger, "tell me at once what you have to say or you will ruin everything."

The queen ordered her attendants to withdraw, then said in a low and tearful voice, "If you hadn't asked me about it I would have taken the secret to the grave with me. Now that you have asked, listen while I tell you: He used to be so passionate and tender,

But three years later on he's turned to frost.

If I whisper to him warmly on the pillow

He pleads old age and says the urge is lost."

At this the crown prince broke away from his mother's embrace and remounted his horse. "What's up, child?"

the queen asked, holding on to him. "Why are you off before we've even finished our conversation?"

The prince then knelt before her and said, "I hardly dare tell you, Mother. When I went out hunting this morning with the falcons and hounds His Majesty kindly lent me I happened to meet a holy monk who was on his way to fetch the scriptures. His senior disciple is Sun the Novice, or Brother Sun. He is very good at exorcising demons. It appears that His Majesty my father is dead in the eight–sided well with glazed tiles in the palace gardens, and that the wizard turned

himself into my father's double in order to usurp the throne. In the middle of last night my father came to him in a dream. He asked the priest to come here to capture the fiend. I came to ask you that question because I couldn't quite bring myself to believe them. From what you have just told me, Mother, I'm now sure he is an evil spirit."

"You shouldn't believe what strangers tell you, my son," said the queen.

"I wouldn't have believed him at all," replied the crown prince, "except that His Majesty my father left proof with him." When the queen asked what it was, the prince produced the gold–bordered white jade scepter from his sleeve and handed it to her. The queen saw it and recognized it as the king's treasure. She could not hold back her tears.

"My lord," she cried out, "why did you never come to me in the three years since you died? Why did you appear to the holy monk and then to the prince first?"

"What do you mean, Mother?" the prince asked.

"My child," said the queen, "I too had a dream in the small hours of the morning. I saw your father standing soaking wet in front of me. He told me himself that he had been killed and that his ghost had called on the Tang Priest to ask him to capture the impostor on the throne and rescue him. I can remember him saying all this, but only very vaguely. I was just wondering about it when you came, asked that question, and showed me the scepter. I'll keep it, and you go and ask that holy monk to be as quick as possible. Then the evil mists can be swept away, truth can be separated from falsehood, and you can repay His Majesty your father for his Chapter 38

kindness in raising you."

The prince quickly remounted and went out through the back gate of the palace to get away from the city.

Indeed:

With tears in his eyes he took leave of his mother;

Bowed down with grief he returned to Sanzang.

He was soon out of the city and back at the gate of the Precious Wood Monastery, where he dismounted amid the greetings of the whole army. It was now almost sunset. The crown prince ordered that the soldiers were to make no unnecessary movements. He then went back into the monastery, neatened up his clothes, and went to pay his respects to Brother Monkey just as he was swaggering out of the main hall.

The prince fell to his knees and said, "Master, I'm back."

Monkey went over to him to raise him to his feet and said, "Please get up. Who did you question when you went into town?"

"I questioned my mother," the crown prince replied, going on to tell him everything that had happened.

Monkey grinned slightly as he said, "If he's that cold he must be a transformation of something icy. Never mind. It doesn't matter. I'll wipe him out for you. The only trouble is that it's a bit late to do anything today.

Go back now and wait till I come to see you tomorrow."

The prince knelt down again, kowtowed and said, "Let me stay here to be at your beck and call till I go in with you tomorrow."

"No," said Monkey, "that would be no good. If we two went into town together the fiend would have his suspicions. He wouldn't think that I'd just met you by chance. He'd say that you'd asked me to come, and then be angry with you."

"But——he's going to be angry with me anyhow if I go back to the city now," replied the prince.

"Why?" asked Monkey.

"Because I'll have no way to face him when I go back without having caught a single thing after taking out so many men, horses, falcons and hounds on his orders this morning," said the prince. "If he punishes me for incompetence I'll be thrown into jail and you'll have nobody to help you when you go into town tomorrow.

And in this whole force there isn't a single friend of mine."

"No problem," said Monkey. "If you'd told me earlier I'd have a good bag ready for you now."

Splendid Great Sage. Watch him as he shows off his powers in front of the prince, leaping up into the clouds with a single bound, making the magic with his fingers, and saying the esoteric words, *"Om ram* Pure Dharma World."

He made the mountain gods and local deities of the place bow to him in mid–air and say, "Great Sage, what orders do you have for us humble deities?"

To this Brother Monkey replied, "I've escorted the Tang Priest this far and now I want to capture a demon.

The trouble is that the crown prince has caught nothing on his hunt, so he doesn't dare return to the palace. I'd like to ask a favour of you all. Will you fetch some river–deer, antelopes, deer, hares, other birds and beasts to send him back with?" None of the mountain gods or local deities dared not to accept this order.

When they asked how many of each were wanted the Great Sage replied, "It doesn't matter. Just get some."

The gods then mustered their invisible soldiers and made a magical animal–gathering wind blow. They caught hundreds and thousands of pheasants, deer, antelopes, river–deer, foxes, badgers, raccoon dogs, hares, tigers, leopards and wolves, which they presented to Monkey.

"I don't want them," he said. "I'd like you to hamstring them and set them out on both sides of the fifteen miles of the road back so that the hunters can take them to the capital without having to use their falcons or hounds.

That will redound to your credit." The gods did as they were told, put their magic wind away, and set the prey out beside the road.

Only then did Brother Monkey bring his cloud down to land and say to the prince, "You may go back now, Your Highness. Your bag is set out by the road for you to collect." After the mid–air display of Monkey's amazing powers the prince was utterly convinced that this had happened, so he could but kowtow and take his leave. He then

went out of the monastery and ordered the soldiers back to the city. There were indeed no end of wild animals by the road that the soldiers could catch with their bare hands, not needing the falcons or dogs. They all cheered the prince and said that this was due to his very good luck, not realizing that it was Monkey's magical achievement. Just listen to the triumphant songs as they swarm back to the capital.

Monkey, meanwhile, was guarding Sanzang. Seeing how well the two of them were getting on with the prince, the monks of the monastery had to treat them with great respect. They provided them with vegetarian meals and looked after the Tang Priest, who was still resting in the meditation hall. For nearly a whole watch, or about two hours, Monkey was too troubled to sleep.

He jumped up, went over to the Tang priest's bed and called, "Master."

Sanzang was still awake too, but he pretended to be asleep because he knew that Monkey was someone who caused alarms and trouble. So Monkey rubbed Sanzang's shaven pate and shouted wildly, "Why are you asleep, Master?"

"Wicked creature," said the Tang Priest angrily, "what are you shouting for at this time of night when you ought to be asleep?"

"But Master," said Monkey, "there's something I want to talk about with you."

"What?" Sanzang asked.

"I can't sleep," Brother Monkey replied, "because when I was boasting to the crown prince yesterday about how my magical powers were higher than mountains and deeper than the sea I said that I could catch that fiend as easily as taking something out of a bag. I'd only have to stretch out my hand to grab him. Thinking about it I realize it would be difficult."

"If it is difficult," said the Tang Priest, "then give up the idea of catching the monster."

"He's certainly got to be caught," said Monkey, "but it isn't right."

"You're talking nonsense, ape," said the Tang Priest. "The fiend has usurped a throne. What do you mean by

'it isn't right?'"

"All you know about is reciting sutras, worshipping the Buddha, sitting in contemplation and seeking religious instruction," said Monkey. "You've never seen the Legal Code. As the saying goes, 'You can't arrest someone for theft without the loot as evidence.' That fiend has been king for three years now without giving the game away. He sleeps with the consorts and concubines in the harem and shares the pleasures of the civil and military officials at court. I have the power to catch him all right; but it'll be hard to make the charges against him stick."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the Tang Priest.

"Even if he normally kept his mouth as shut as an unopened gourd," said Monkey, "he'll brazen it out with you and say, 'I'm the monarch of Wuji. What crime have I committed against Heaven that you should come to arrest me?' What written documentation have you got to back up your case against him?"

"How would you cope?" asked Sanzang.

"My plan's already made," said Brother Monkey with a laugh. "The only thing is that it affects Your Reverence and your favoritism."

"How do I show favoritism?" the Tang Priest asked.

"Because Pig is so stupid he's rather a pet of yours."

"What do you mean by that?" the Tang Priest asked.

"Well, if he's not your favorite, be a bit bolder today and agree to stay here with Friar Sand while Pig and I go ahead to the capital of Wuji, find the palace gardens, open up the glazed—tile well, fish out the remains of the dead king, and wrap them up in a carrying—cloth. Then when we go into town tomorrow never mind about the travel documents——as soon as I see the fiend I'll have my cudgel out to kill him. If he tries to argue, show him the remains and the clothes and say, 'This is the man you murdered.' Then bring the crown prince in to mourn his father and the queen to identify the remains of her husband. Let all the civil and military officials see their true lord, and

then Pig and I will set to. That's the only way we'll be able to win a contested lawsuit afterwards."

On hearing this the Tang Priest concealed his delight and said, "But Pig might not be willing to go."

"There you are," said Monkey, "I said you showed favoritism. How do you know he won't want to go? It's just like the way you refused to respond for a whole hour when I kept trying to wake you. My three inches of tongue could make Pig come with me even if he were a Pig —and—a—half."

"Very well," said Sanzang, "call him if you like."

Monkey then took his leave of the master, went straight to Pig's bed, and called his name. The idiot was lying with his head hanging down, snoring heavily after his exhausting journey. Mere calling was not going to wake him. Monkey grabbed him by his ears and his bristles, pulled him up, and shouted "Pig!" again. The idiot was Chapter 38

still fast asleep.

When Monkey called him again Pig said, "Go to sleep, and stop fooling around. We've got to be on our way again tomorrow."

"I'm not fooling," said Monkey. "There's a piece of business for us two to do."

"What sort of business?" Pig asked.

"Didn't you hear the prince telling us?" said Monkey.

"I didn't even see him," said Pig, "let alone hear him say anything."

"The prince told me that the fiend has a treasure that makes him a match for ten thousand men in a fight," said Monkey. "When we go into town we'll have to fight him, and if he has that treasure he'll beat us. That would be terrible. I reckon that if the other side is stronger than you the best thing to do is to strike first. Wouldn't be best if the two of us went and stole his treasure?"

"You're trying to trick me into thieving, brother," said Pig. "I'll come in on this bit of business, and I'll be very useful to you too, but first I

want to get something clear with you. When we've stolen the treasure and captured the demon I won't stand for any mean, small—minded sharing out of the treasure. I want the lot."

"Why?" Monkey asked. "I haven't got your gift of the gab. I can't wheedle food out of people. I'm clumsy and rough—spoken, and I can't recite sutras. When I'm really on my uppers I can always swap it for food."

"All I'm interested in is fame," said Monkey. "I don't care about treasures. You can have it if you like." The idiot was so happy to be promised the treasure that he rolled himself out of bed, dressed, and set out with Monkey. It was a case of

Clear wine makes the cheeks go red;

Gold turns everybody's head.

The two of them opened the door very quietly, left Sanzang and took an auspicious cloud straight to the city.

They were soon there, and as they brought their cloud down to land they heard the drum on the tower being beaten twice. "It's the second watch, brother," said Monkey.

"Just right," said Pig, "just right. Everybody's fast asleep." The two of them avoided the main gate and went round to the back gate of the palace, where clappers and bells were being sounded. "Brother," said Monkey,

"it sounds as though there's an alarm at both front and back gates. How are we going to get in?"

"Who ever heard of burglars going in through the gates?" said Pig. "Let's go over the wall so that nobody sees us." Monkey accepted his suggestion, and with a bound he was on top of the inner wall. Pig jumped up too, then the pair of them crept inside and tried to find their way to the palace gardens.

Chapter 38

As they walked along they saw a gate—tower in front of them with

triple eaves and white ornaments. On it were two huge words, gleaming bright: ROYAL GARDENS. Going up to it for a closer look Brother Monkey saw that layer after layer of sealing paper had been pasted over the gates, and the locks on them had rusted hard. He then told Pig to get moving. The idiot raised his iron rake and brought it down with all his might on the gates, smashing them to splinters. Monkey was just going to step inside when he was seized with an irresistible urge to leap about and shout, to the horror of Pig who went up to him, grabbed him and said,

"You'll be the death of me, brother. Who ever heard of burglars yelling like that? You'll wake them up and get us arrested and handed over to for trial. Then it'll be either a death sentence or being sent home as convicts."

"Brother," said Monkey, "do you know why I'm so upset? Just look!

Carved and painted balustrades all in a mess,

Precious pavilions leaning awry.

The sedge and nutweed on the bank are buried.

The peonies and raspberries have been ruined.

Gone is the fragrance of rose and jasmine;

Tree peony and wild lily flower in vain.

Hibiscus and rose of Sharon are overgrown,

And all the precious flowers choked.

The hillocks built from strange–shaped rocks have collapsed;

The fish are dead in the dried–up ponds.

Dry as tinder the pine and bamboo;

Mugwort and wormwood carpet the paths.

Broken the branches of peach and osmanthus,

Twisted the trunks of pomegranate and kerria.

Moss grows on the zigzag way to the bridge:

A desolate garden scene."

"What are you getting so upset about?" Pig asked. "Let's get on with our bit of business." Despite his distress Monkey remembered how in his dream the Tang Priest had been told that the well was under a plantain. As he went further he did indeed see a plantain that was most luxuriant, unlike all the other flowers and trees.

Indeed:

Chapter 38

535

Journey to the West

It was a divine shoot

Born with an empty nature.

Papery strips came from every branch,

And all the leaves wrapped up fragrance.

A thousand fine stands of emerald green,

A touch of red at the heart.

It grieved in the cold of autumn rain;

It withered with fear of the autumn winds.

It was grown through the efforts of the gardener,

Raised through the Creator's work.

Wonderful its value as writing paper,

Marvellous its use for dripping water.

Would that phoenix feathers could have compared;

A phoenix tail was no match for its leaves.

When the ample dew dripped gently

The tree was lightly wreathed in mist.

Its green shade covered the window,

Its jade shadow fell on the frame.

The wild goose could not perch in its fronds,

Nor the charger be tethered to its trunk.

On a frosty day it looked withered;

It was dim in the moonlight.

It could only refresh one in summer's heat

And offer some shelter from the blazing sun.

It lacked the beauty of peach or plum,

Standing lonely to the East of the whitewashed wall.

"Set to, Pig," said Monkey. "The treasure's buried under the plantain." The idiot raised his rake in both hands and sent the tree crashing down. Then he rooted in with his snout to a depth of three or four feet, revealing a stone cover.

"We're in luck, brother," exclaimed the idiot with delight. "There really is a treasure here under this stone cover. I wonder whether it's inside a jar or a box."

"Lift the cover and we'll see," said Monkey. With another root of his snout the idiot prized it open. There was a glow of multicolored light, and a bright, white vapor.

"We're in luck, we're in luck," chortled Pig. "The treasure's shining."

Going nearer for a closer look they saw that it was in fact the starlight and the moonlight reflected by the water in a well.

"Brother," said Pig, "you ought to think ahead."

"What do you mean, think ahead?" asked Monkey.

"This is a well," said Pig. "If you'd told me back in the monastery that the treasure was hidden in a well I'd have brought a couple of the luggage ropes along with me and we could have worked out a way of letting me down the well. But how am I going to go down there to fetch the thing empty–handed?"

"Are you willing to go down?" Monkey asked.

"I would if I could," said Pig, "but there's no rope."

"Take that garment off– –I know what to do," said Monkey with a grin.

"I've got nothing good enough to be called a garment," said Pig. "The only thing I could take off is this tunic."

The splendid Great Sage brought out his gold–tipped cudgel, pulled it at both ends, and said, "Grow!" It grew seventy or eighty feet long. "You hold one end, Pig, and I'll lower you in," said Monkey.

"Let me down till I reach the water, brother, and then stop," said Pig.

"Understood," said Monkey. As the idiot clung to the tip of the cudgel Monkey lightly lifted him up and lowered him into the well. Before long Pig had reached the water. As soon as Monkey heard him call out that he was there, Monkey thrust the cudgel down, making the idiot let go of it and tumble in with a splash.

"Heavens, I'm being murdered," Pig mumbled in the water. "I told you not to let me go when I got to the water, but you pushed me in."

Monkey pulled his cudgel out and asked with a laugh, "Can you find the treasure, brother?"

"What treasure?" said Pig. "There's only a wellful of water."

Chapter 38

"The treasure's at the bottom," said Monkey, "so go down and have a feel around." The idiot, who really was a good swimmer, did a surface dive and plunged down. Wow! The well was extremely deep, so he thrust himself even further down, and was suddenly gazing in astonishment at an ornamental arch on which were written the word

WATER CRYSTAL PALACE.

"That's enough of this," said Pig with horror. "I've taken the wrong turning. I must have blundered into the sea. There are water crystal palaces in the sea, but there couldn't possibly be one in a well." What Pig did not realize was that this was the water crystal palace of the Dragon King of the Well.

As Pig was talking to himself a patrolling yaksha opened the gates and shot straight back inside again at the sight of him to report, "A disaster, Your Majesty. A monk with big ears and a long snout has just fallen into the well. He's dripping wet and stark naked. He's still alive and is talking for all he's worth."

The news was a great shock to the Dragon King of the Well, who thought, "This must be Marshal Tian Peng.

Yesterday evening the Patroller of the Night came with an edict ordering me to send the soul of the king of Wuji to visit the Tang Priest and ask that the Great Sage Equaling Heaven be sent to capture the fiend. I suppose that the Great Sage and the Marshal must be here now. I must be very polite to them and go straight out to welcome them."

The dragon king neatened up his clothes and went out through the gates at the head of his watery tribe.

"Please come in and take a seat, Marshal Tian Peng," he called at the top of his voice.

This made Pig feel a great deal happier. "So it's an old friend," he thought. Without any further thought the idiot went straight into the water crystal palace. He really had no sense of proper behavior, and sat, stark naked as he was, in the place of honour.

"Marshal," said the dragon king, "I hear that you have been given a new life, been converted to the Buddhist faith, and are escorting the Tang Priest on his journey West to fetch the scriptures. What bring you here?"

"It's just as you say. My senior fellow – disciple Monkey sends his respects and has told me to come here to ask you for some kind of treasure."

"Oh dear," said the dragon king, "we don't have any treasure here. I'm no match for the dragon kings of the Yangtse, Yellow, Huai or Ji

rivers, who can fly around, do transformations, and get treasure that way. I've been stuck here for ages, and not been able to broaden my horizons for many a long month, so how could I possibly get any treasures?"

"Stop trying to fob me off," said Pig. "Bring out whatever you've got."

"It's true I do have one treasure," admitted the dragon king, "but I can't move it. Perhaps you would like to come and see it for yourself, Marshal."

"Splendid, splendid, splendid," said Pig. "I really must have a look."

The idiot followed as the dragon king led the way. As they left the halls of the water crystal palace they saw a body six feet long lying in an open corridor. "There's the treasure," said the dragon king, pointing to it. When Pig took a closer look he saw to his astonishment that it was the body of a king stretched ramrod—straight and wearing a heaven—touching crown, a robe of yellow ochre, no—worry shoes and a belt of Lantain jade.

"This is no good at all," chuckled Pig, "no good at all. Can't call that a treasure. I remember that when I was an ogre in the mountains I often used to make a meal out of things like that. Never mind how many of them I've seen— —I've eaten a lot. There's no way you could call that a treasure."

"There are some things you don't know, Marshal," said the dragon king. "It's the body of the king of Wuji.

When he fell into the well I put a face—preserving pearl on him and he has not decomposed. If you were to carry the body up to see the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, and if it could be brought back to life, then you'd get anything you asked for, never mind just treasures."

"If what you say is right and I carry him up for you, tell me how much you'll pay me for arranging his funeral," Pig said.

"Honestly, I don't have any money," the dragon king replied.

"So you like making people work for nothing, do you?" said Pig. "No money, no carriage."

"If you won't, then please be on your way," replied the dragon king. Pig left with two hefty yakshas who carried the body outside the palace gates, where they put it down and removed the water −repelling pearl.

At once there was a watery noise. Pig turned straight back to look, but the water crystal palace had disappeared. After feeling the king's corpse he floundered around until he was weak from exhaustion, then surfaced and took hold of the wall of the well. "Brother," he yelled, "lower the cudgel and rescue me."

"Got a treasure?" asked Monkey.

"No way," said Pig. "All I found under the water was the Dragon King of the Well who wanted me to carry a corpse up. When I refused he saw me out and the water crystal palace disappeared. I could only grasp that corpse. I was in such a panic that I went weak all over and I can't move it. Brother, for goodness' sake rescue me."

"But that is the treasure," said Monkey. "Why didn't you bring it up?"

"I knew he'd been dead for ages," said Pig, "so what would have been the point?"

"If you won't bring it up I'm going back," said Monkey.

"Where to?" Pig asked.

"Back to the monastery and our master to go to bed," replied Monkey.

"Can't I come?" said Pig.

"You're welcome if you can climb out, but if you can't, tough luck," said Monkey. This threw Pig into a panic as he could not climb out.

"Just think," he called, "a city wall is hard enough to climb. This well narrows towards the top. It's got round, overhanging walls, all overgrown with very slippery moss because nobody's drawn water from it for years.

How d'you expect me to climb it? Brother, don't forget we're good friends. I'm going down to get it."

"Good," said Monkey. "Bring it up quick and we'll go back to bed." The

idiot then did another surface dive and plunged straight down. He groped around till he found the body, dragged it over and carried it up till he Chapter 38

surfaced again.

"I've brought it up, brother," Pig called as he supported himself at the side of the well. When Monkey took a good look and saw that Pig really had brought the body up he lowered the gold–banded cudgel back into the well. Pig was so angry that he opened his mouth and bit on the cudgel while Monkey gently lifted him out.

Pig put the corpse down, retrieved his own clothes, and put them back on. Monkey examined the king's face and saw that it was exactly as it had been in life. "Brother," he said, "he's been dead three years. Why is his face so well preserved?"

"You wouldn't know about that," said Pig. "The Dragon King of the Well told me that he'd used a face–preserving pearl to stop the body from decomposing."

"What luck," said Monkey, "what luck. He hasn't had his revenge yet, and we're going to succeed. Put him over your shoulder, brother."

"Where shall I take him?" Pig asked.

"Take him to see the master," Monkey replied.

"What a way to treat me," grumbled Pig, "what a way. I was fast asleep when that baboon used his slippery tongue to fool me with that talk of a bit of business. Now I've done it for him I've got to carry this dead body.

All this dirty water is dripping down on me and making my tunic filthy. There's nobody to wash it for me. The patches on the shoulders will get damp on overcast days. I won't possibly be able to wear it."

"You carry him to the monastery," said Monkey, "and I'll give you something else to wear instead."

"You're shameless," said Pig. "You have well–nigh nothing to wear yourself and you talk of giving me something else."

"If you're going to moan like this then don't carry it," said Monkey.

"I won't then," said Pig.

"Then put your ankles out for twenty strokes of the cudgel," said Monkey.

"But, brother, your cudgel hits very hard," protested Pig in panic. "Twenty strokes and I'll be like this king."

"If you don't want a beating then get on with carrying him," said Monkey. As he really was afraid of a beating Pig dragged the body over, put it across his shoulder and walked out of the palace gardens with an ill grace.

The splendid Great Sage made magic with his hands, said a spell, and blew towards the direction of the wind trigram. At once a tremendous gust of wind plucked Pig out of the palace grounds and over the city wall and moat. The wind then fell, dropping the pair of them on the ground to continue on their way more slowly. The idiot, who was still feeling very hard done by and wanted to get his own back on Monkey, said to himself,

"That ape put one over on me, and when we get back to the monastery I'm going to get my own back on him.

I'll tell the master that Monkey can bring the body back to life. When he fails the master will say the Band–tightening Spell and all the brains will be squeezed out of that ape's head. That's the only way I'll be satisfied. No, that's no good," he went on to think as he walked along. "If I ask him to revive the body that'll be too easy for him. He'll only have to call on the King of Hell and ask for the king's soul back. The best way will be to ban him from going to the Underworld. He'll have to bring the king back to life in the world of the Chapter 38

living."

While he was still thinking these thoughts he arrived back at the monastery gates. He went straight in, flung the corpse to the ground right in front of the doors to the meditation hall, and shouted, "Master, come and see a freak." The Tang Priest, unable to sleep, was talking to Friar Sand about how Monkey had tricked Pig into going

and how long they'd been gone when he heard Pig's shout. The Tang Priest got straight out of bed and said, "See what?"

"Brother Monkey's grandpa, and I've had to carry him back," said Pig.

"You dreg–guzzling idiot," said Monkey. "I've got no grandpa."

"Well, brother," replied Pig, "if he isn't your grandpa, why did you make me carry him? It was damned hard work."

When Sanzang and Friar Sand opened the doors to look they saw that the king's face was quite unchanged from what it had been in life. "Your Majesty," said the Tang Priest sorrowfully, "who knows in what earlier life you earned the wizard's hatred? That must be why when you met in this one he murdered you and snatched you from your wives and children unbeknown to any of the civilian or military officials. What a pity it was that in their ignorance your wives and children should never have burnt incense and offered tea to your spirit." He broke into sobs and his tears poured down like rain.

"What's his death to you?" asked Pig, laughing at Sanzang. "He's not your father or grandfather, so why weep for him?"

"Disciple," sighed Sanzang, "compassion is the fundamental quality of a monk, and helping others is a monk's way. How can you be so hard–hearted?"

"I'm not hard–hearted," said Pig. "Monkey told me that he could bring this body back to life. Otherwise I wouldn't have carried it here." The venerable elder, as easily swayed as ever, was taken in by the idiot.

"Wukong," he called, "if you have the power to bring this king back to life, it would be a case of saving a single human life being better than building a seven–storied pagoda. For us it would be even better than worshipping the Buddha on Thunder Peak."

"Don't believe that idiot's nonsense, Master," said Monkey. "By the time people have been dead for three weeks, then five weeks, and finally for seven hundred days, they've paid for all their sins in this life and go off to be reborn. He's been dead for three years now. He's beyond saving."

At this the Tang Priest said, "Oh well, forget it." Pig was still burning with a sense of injustice. "Master," he said, "don't be taken in by him. He's talking rubbish. You just recite your spell and I guarantee he'll bring the king back to life for you." The Tang Priest did indeed say the

Band – tightening Spell, which squeezed Monkey so badly that his eyes bulged and his head ached.

If you don't know how the king was revived, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 39

A Pill of Red Cinnabar Is Brought from Heaven

Chapter 39

541

Journey to the West

After Three Years the Monarch Is Revived

The story tells how the Great Sage Sun, his head aching unbearably, pleaded with his master: "Stop, stop, I'll bring him back to life." When Sanzang asked how, Monkey replied, "The only way is to go to the Underworld, find out which of the kings down there has his soul, and ask for it back to revive him with."

"Don't trust Monkey, Master," said Pig. "He told me earlier there'd be no need to go to the Underworld because he could get him brought back to life in the world of the living. He thought that would be a good way of showing off his powers."

The venerable elder, taken in once again by this breath of evil, started reciting the Band – tightening Spell, which threw Monkey into such a desperate state that he accepted the condition gladly: "I'll cure him within the world of the living, I really will."

"Don't stop," said Pig, "carry on saying the spell."

"You stupid, evil beast," railed Monkey, "inciting the master to say that spell." Pig was falling about with laughter.

"Brother, brother, you thought you could put one over on me, but you never imagined I'd put one over on you."

"Stop, Master, stop," pleaded Monkey. "I'll bring him back to life without leaving the world of the living."

"And how are you going to do that?" Sanzang asked.

"With a single somersault of my cloud I can rush in through the Southern Gate of Heaven," said Monkey. "I won't go to the Palace of the Dipper and the Bull or to the Hall of Miraculous Mist, but straight up to the Tushita Palace in the Lihen Heaven above the Thirty–third Heaven to see the Supreme Lord Lao Zi. I'll ask him for one of his Nine–cycle Soul–returning Pills and that, I guarantee, will bring him back to life."

"Off you go then," said Sanzang, delighted to hear this, "and be as quick as you can."

"It's the third watch now; it'll be after dawn by the time I get back," said Brother Monkey. "But it's an awful shame to see that king lying there dead and cold. There ought to be a mourner watching over him and weeping."

"Don't tell me," said Pig, "that ape wants me to be the mourner."

"You most certainly will be," said Monkey. "If you don't weep for him I won't be able to bring him back to life."

"You go, brother," said Pig, "and leave the crying to me."

"There's more than one way of crying," said Monkey. "Just yelling with your mouth is what they call wailing.

Squeezing some tears out is weeping. What we need is sobbing and tears together, and sobbing as though your heart is broken, for really proper weeping and wailing."

"Shall I give you a demonstration?" asked Pig. He tore a strip of paper from somewhere, twisted it into a spill, and pushed it up his nose twice, which made him sneeze several times. Just watch as the tears come streaming down and his nose runs as he starts to wail. He sobbed and sobbed uncontrollably, talking all sorts of Chapter 39

nonsense as if someone really had just died.

It was so distressing a performance that the Tang Priest started to cry, so upset was he. "That's just the sort of grief I want," laughed Monkey, "and you're not to stop crying. It was you who tricked the master into sending me off, you idiot, and I'll hear if you stop wailing. Carry on

like this and you'll be fine; but if you stop for even a few moments I'll give you twenty blows of my cudgel on your ankles."

"Off you go," laughed Pig. "Once I get crying like this I can keep it up for a couple of days." Hearing all this fuss and bother, Friar Sand fetched some incense sticks and lit them as an offering.

"Very good," said Monkey. "As you are all being so respectful I'll be able to do my best."

Thus the Great Sage left his master and two fellow–disciples in the middle of the night and shot up on a somersault cloud. He went in through the Southern Gate of Heaven, and was as good as his word: he did not go to the Hall of Miraculous Mist or the Palace of the Dipper and the Bull, but took his shining cloud straight up to the Tushita Palace in the Lihen Heaven. No sooner was he inside than he saw the Supreme Lord Lao Zi sitting in his elixir laboratory where immortal boys were using a plantain–leaf fan to fan the furnace where elixir was refined.

When the Supreme Lord saw that Monkey was there he told the boys who were looking after the elixir, "Be very careful: the elixir thief is back."

Monkey paid his respects with a smile: "How dreary of you, old man. No need to be on your guard against me. I don't do things like that any more."

"Ape," said Lord Lao Zi, "you stole a lot of my magic pills five hundred years ago when you made havoc in Heaven. The Little Sage Erlang captured you and brought you up here to be refined for forty–nine days in my elixir furnace. Goodness only knows how much charcoal we used up. Since you've been lucky enough to escape and be converted to Buddhism, you've been escorting the Tang Priest on his journey to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures. When you subdued those monsters on Flat–top Mountain the other day you were very wicked; you refused to give me back my treasures. What are you here for now?"

"I really wasn't being late with them," protested Monkey. "When the time came I gave you back your five treasures. What are you being so suspicious of me for?"

"Why have you come sneaking into my palace when you ought to be on your journey?" Lord Lao Zi asked.

"Since last I saw you," said Monkey, "we've come to a country further West called Wuji, where an evil spirit disguised as a Taoist called up wind and rain, murdered the king, and turned himself into the king's double.

Now he's sitting in the palace. Last night my master was reading sutras in the Precious Wood Monastery when he was visited by the king's ghost, who begged me to subdue the fiend for him and sort right from wrong. I didn't know whether to believe this, so I went with my fellow – disciple Pig into the palace gardens that night.

We smashed our way in and found where he was buried in an eight – sided well with glazed – tile walls. We fished up his body, and it was in perfect condition. When we went back to the monastery to see my master he ordered me in his compassion to bring the king back to life. He won't let me go to the Underworld to ask for his soul back: I've got to find a way of saving him in the world of the living. The reason I've come to pay my respects to you is because there's no other place I can get him revived. I beg you, great Patriarch, in your mercy to lend me a thousand of your Nine – cycle Soul – returning Pills to save him with."

"What outrageous nonsense, you ape," said Lord Lao Zi. "A thousand? Two thousand? Do you want to make a meal of them? They're not just pellets of dirt. Clear off! I've none left."

"What about a hundred or thereabouts?" asked Monkey.

"Not even that," said Lord Lao Zi. "Ten or so?" asked Monkey. "Stop pestering me, you wretched ape," said Lord Lao Zi. "None at all. Clear off!"

"If you really haven't got any," said Monkey with a laugh, "I'll have to ask for help elsewhere."

"Get out! Get out! Get out!" roared Lord Lao Zi, at which Monkey turned away and went.

It then suddenly occurred to Lord Lao Zi that Monkey was so wicked that even after he had announced his departure and gone, he might

slip back and steal some. So he sent some immortal boys to call Monkey back.

"You're so light–fingered, you monkey," he said, "that I'd better give you a Soul–returning Pill."

"Since you know my powers, old man," said Brother Monkey, "bring out all your golden elixir and split it forty–sixty with me. You can consider yourself lucky. I might have taken the lot of them, like scooping up water in a leather sieve." The patriarch produced the gourd and turned it upside–down. A solitary golden pill fell out. "It's the only one I have," said Lord Lao Zi, handing it to Monkey. "Take it. I'm giving it to you to revive the king with and you can take the credit for it."

"Just a moment," thought Monkey as he accepted it. "Let me taste it. He might be trying to fool me with a fake." He popped it into his mouth, to the consternation of the patriarch, who grabbed him by the skullcap with one hand and seized his fist with the other. "Damned ape," roared Lord Lao Zi, "if you've swallowed that I'll have had you killed."

"What a face," laughed Monkey. "How petty you look. I wouldn't want to eat your pill. It's not worth tuppence, and it's nothing like it's cracked up to be. Here it is." Monkey had a pouch under his chin in which he had been keeping the pill.

Lord Lao Zi felt it, then said, "Clear off, and never come back here to pester me again." The Great Sage then thanked the patriarch and left the Tushita Palace.

Watch him as he leaves the jade gates in a thousand beams of light and comes down to earth amid ten thousand auspicious clouds. In an instant he was out through the Southern Gate of Heaven and back to the land in the East, where the sun was now rising. He brought his cloud straight down to land outside the gate of the Precious Wood Monastery, where Pig could still be heard wailing. He approached and called, "Master."

"You're back, Wukong," said Sanzang with delight. "Have you got the pill?"

"Yes," said Monkey.

"Of course he would," said Pig, "even if he had to steal it."

"Brother," said Monkey, "you can go away now. We don't need you to do that any more. Dry your tears or go and weep somewhere else." Monkey then asked Friar Sand to fetch him some water. Friar Sand hurried to the well at the back where there was a convenient bucket and fetched Monkey half a bowlful of water. Monkey took the water, spat the pill out, and placed it between the king's lips. Then he prized the body's teeth apart with both hands and spurted the pill with a mouthful of clean water down into the king's stomach. For the next hour wild noises could be heard from the stomach, but still the body could not move. "Master," said Monkey,

"not even fetching my golden elixir is going to save him. Are you really going to torture me to death?"

Chapter 39

"Of course he will come back to life," said Sanzang. "How else could a body so long dead swallow the water?

This shows the miraculous power of the golden elixir. Once the golden elixir is in the stomach, the stomach starts singing; and when the stomach sings the blood – pulses move in harmony with it. The only thing is that the vital breath has been cut off and cannot extend itself. Iron would rust if it had been in a well for three years – – how do you expect a human body to react? Now that his own vital breath has gone someone has to give him a mouthful of air." Pig stepped forward to do this, only to be grabbed by Sanzang, who said, "You won't do. Get Wukong to come."

Why did the master insist on this? It was because Pig had been a vicious man – eater since childhood, which meant that his breath was impure; whereas Monkey had cultivated his conduct since he was young and lived off the fruits of pine, cypress and peach trees, which gave him pure breath. So the Great Sage stepped forward, made a terrible thunder – god face, put his mouth to the king's lips, and blew in. The breath went down the kings mouth, through the High Tower, round the Bright Hall and straight to the Cinnabar Field, then flowed back from the Bubbling Springs to the Mud – pill Palace. With a noisy rush of air the king's vital breath came together and his spirit refunded.

He sat up flexed his hands and feet, and called out, "Master." Then he

knelt in the dust and said, "I remember visiting you last night as a ghost, but I never expected to return to the world of the living today."

Sanzang hastened to raise him to his feet and said, "Your Majesty, it was none of my doing. You should thank my disciple."

"What a thing to say, Master," laughed Monkey. "As the saying goes, 'A house can't have two masters.' It's quite right that you should accept his thanks."

Sanzang, still uncomfortable about accepting this courtesy, helped the king to his feet and took him into the meditation hall. Here the king bowed in greeting to Pig, Monkey and Friar Sand before taking his seat. By now the monks of the monastery had prepared breakfast, and they were going to bring it in when they saw the dripping wet king to their general alarm and suspicion.

Monkey leap out to say, "Don't worry, monks. This is the king of Wuji, your true sovereign. Three years ago he was murdered by a demon, and I brought him back to life last night. Today we'll be going to the capital to sort right from wrong. If you have any food, bring it in. We'll eat and then we'll be on our way." The monks then brought in hot water for the king to wash with and a change of clothes. They took off the king's yellow ochre robe and gave him two of the abbot's cloth habits, with a yellow silk cord to tie around the waist instead of the belt of Lantian jade. They slipped off his no-worry shoes and put a pair of old monastic sandals on his feet instead. Then they all ate breakfast and the horse was saddled up.

"How heavy's the luggage, Pig?" Monkey asked.

"I've been carrying it for so long that I don't know any more," Pig replied.

"Divide the stuff into two loads," said Monkey, "and give one to the king to carry. We must be in town early to get on with the job."

"I'm in luck," said Pig. "It took me one heck of an effort to carry him here, but now that he's alive again he's doing my work for me."

The idiot asked the monastery for a carrying-pole and divided the luggage unfairly. He put all the light things into his load and the heavier ones into the king's. "Your Majesty," laughed Monkey, "don't you feel hard done by, dressed like that and having to walk with us carrying a load?" The monarch fell straight to his knees and Chapter 39

replied, "Master, you're the father and mother who have given me a second life. Never mind carrying the baggage— —I'd be your groom to serve you on your journey to the Western Heaven."

"No need for you to go there," said Sanzang. "We are bound to by fate. You'll just have to carry the stuff the fifteen miles into town. Once we've captured the fiend you must go back to ruling again and we'll go on to fetch our scriptures."

Pig's comment on this was, "That means he'll only carry it for those fifteen miles, and I'll have to continue as the permanent porter."

"That's enough of that nonsense, brother," said Monkey. "Hurry out and lead the way." Pig then led the way forward with the king while Friar Sand helped the master mount and Monkey brought up the rear. The five hundred monks of the monastery drew themselves up in an orderly procession to see them off to the accompaniment of music. "There's no need for you to come any further to see us on our way," said Monkey with a smile. "It would be disastrous if any official heard about it and news of what we are going to do leaked out. Please please go straight back. I'd just like you to get His Majesty's clothes clean and tidy then send them into the capital this evening or tomorrow morning. I'll see to it that you're properly rewarded." The monks obediently returned, and Monkey hastened his pace to catch up with his master as they pressed ahead. Indeed: In the West there was a magic spell to yield the truth;

Metal and Wood together refined the spirit.

The Mother of Cinnabar had a mysterious dream,

The boy grieved over the useless body.

The true ruler had to be found at the bottom of a well,

And a visit to Lord Lao Zi in Heaven was required.

Realizing that matter is void, he regained his nature;

The Buddha indeed saves those who are so predestined.

It took master and disciples less than a morning to make their journey,

and they were soon near the city.

"Wukong," said Sanzang, "I think that must be the capital of Wuji ahead of us."

"You're right," said Monkey. "Let's get there soon and do our job." As they entered the city they saw that the people in the streets were well dressed and that there was an air of busy prosperity. The phoenix pavilions and dragon towers of the palace looked most magnificent, and there is a poem to prove it: These palaces resemble those of a great state;

The singing and dancing here are like in Tang.

Flowers face precious fans, and red clouds sail above;

Robes shine emerald in the sun.

The peacock gates open on clouds of incense,

Coloured flags fly over the curtains of pearl.

Truly an admirable picture of prosperity:

The officials stand silent with nothing to report.

Sanzang dismounted and said, "Disciple, I think we should go to the palace and submit our travel document so as to avoid trouble from petty officials."

"You're right," said Monkey. "My brothers and I will all go in together. It'll be much easier to manage if there are several of us."

"If you all go in," said Sanzang, "don't talk rough. Pay your respects to him as a subject would to his sovereign before you say anything."

"Does that mean kowtowing?" Monkey asked.

"Yes," said Sanzang, "the full obeisance with five bows and three kowtows."

"You're useless, Master," laughed Brother Monkey. "It would be really stupid to do obeisance to him. You'd better let me go in first and sort things out. I'll see what he has to say before deciding how to reply. If I bow, you all bow; and if I squat, you all squat."

Watch as the trouble–making Monkey King leads them to the palace gates and says to the official on duty there, "We are pilgrims sent by the Great Tang Emperor in the East to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. Today we have come to present our credentials and I would trouble you, distinguished sir, to pass them on for us. In this way you will not hinder our excellent achievement."

The gate officer then went in through the Southern gates of the palace, knelt on the steps, and reported, "There are five monks outside the gates who say that they are pilgrims sent by the Great Tang to worship the Buddha and fetch scriptures from the Western Heaven. They are now here to present their credentials, and rather than intrude uninvited they are awaiting they royal summons outside the gates."

The fiend–monarch sent for them at once. As he went in through the palace gates with the Tang Priest, the king who had been brought back to life could not hold back his tears, which flowed down his cheeks. "How awful it is," he thought, "that my kingdom, which is as strong as bronze and iron, has been secretly stolen from me."

"Don't upset yourself, Your Majesty," said Monkey, "or you'll give the game away. My cudgel is dancing in my ear and it's absolutely bound to succeed. I guarantee that I'll kill the fiend and sweep away all his filth. The kingdom will soon be yours again." The king dared not disobey, so wiping away his tears with his clothes he took his life in his hands and followed them as they went into the main audience hall of the palace.

Chapter 39

Next were to be seen the civil and military officials and the four hundred courtiers, all towering over them in majestic silence. Monkey led the Tang Priest to stand unmoving at the foot of the white jade steps. The officials below the steps all trembled with fear.

"What a stupid monk," they said. "Fancy seeing our king without even bowing to him or saying anything polite. He hasn't even made a respectful chant. What brazen effrontery."

Before the words were out of their mouths the fiend–king asked, "Where is that monk from?"

To this Monkey boldly replied, "He is a pilgrim sent by imperial command from the land of Great Tang in the East of the Southern Jambu Continent to go to the Thunder Monastery in India in the West in order to worship the living Buddha and fetch the true scriptures. Now that he is here he does not wish to pass through your country without reporting his presence, which is why he has come today to submit his credentials."

Hearing this, the fiend–king thought angrily, "What's so special about your Eastern land? I don't pay tribute to your court or have any dealings with your monarch. So how dare you be so rude and not bow to me?"

"We in the East have long had a Heavenly dynasty," said Monkey with a smile, "and been regarded as a superior country, while yours is just an inferior frontier state. As the old saying has it, The emperor of a greater land

Is the father and the superior,

The ruler of a lesser state

Is the son and the inferior.

You didn't even come out to meet us. How dare you complain about us not bowing!"

In a raging fury the fiend–king ordered his civil and military officials, "Arrest that uncouth monk." At the word "Arrest" the officials all rushed at Monkey, who gave a shout, pointed at them, and told them to keep back. By pointing at them he made magic that immobilized them. None of the officials could now move.

Indeed:

The colonels before the steps became wooden figurines;

The generals in the hall were statues of clay.

Seeing that all his civil and military officials had been turned to statues, the fiend—king leapt down from his dragon throne and was just about to seize Monkey, who thought gleefully, "Just what I want. Even if his head is made of iron, one touch of my cudgel will be enough to make a hole in it." But as the fiend started to move a rescuer came forward from beside him.

Do you know who it was? It was the crown prince of Wuji, who rushed forward to grab the fiend's court robes, kneel before him, and say, "Please don't be angry, Your Majesty."

"Why, my boy?" asked the fiend.

"Let me tell you, father. Three years ago I heard tell that a holy monk had been sent by the Tang Emperor to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. I never thought that he would be here in our country today. Your Majesty has a fiery temper, and I'm afraid that you will have the monk beheaded, and that the Great Tang Emperor will be furious when he eventually hears the news. Since making himself ruler the Tang Emperor Li Shimin has unified the country, but he isn't satisfied yet. He has sent military expeditions overseas already. If he learns, sir, that you have killed this holy priest who is his sworn brother he's bound to raise an army to wage war on you. Our forces are much too weak to cope, but by then it will be too late for regrets. If Your Majesty will accept your son's suggestion you should have the four monks arrested and thoroughly questioned. Hold them on the charge of not paying obeisance to the royal presence; sentence can be passed later."

All these suggestion to hold the fiend back were made because the crown prince was worried that the fiend would harm the Tang Priest. He did not realize that Monkey had deliberately done things in that way in order to get a crack at the fiend.

The fiend accepted the prince's advice, stood before his throne, and roared, "Monk, when did you leave the East? Why did the Tang monarch send you to fetch scriptures?"

Monkey stood proud as he replied, "My master is the Tang Emperor's sworn brother, and his title is Sanzang.

The Tang Emperor has a minister called Wei Zheng who beheaded the old dragon of the Jing River in a dream because Heaven ordered him to. When the Tang Emperor came back to life after dreaming that he had toured the Underworld, he held a Great Water and Land Mass to save the souls of all those who had been unjustly slain. Because my master preached on the scriptures with such broad compassion the Bodhisattva Guanyin instructed him to travel West. My master made a solemn vow volunteering gladly to do this in order to express his full loyalty to his country, and was given a letter of credence by the Tang Emperor. This was three days before the full moon in the ninth month of the thirteenth year of the reign–period *Tien Guan.* After leaving the lands of the East he came to the Double–boundary Mountain, where he took me to be his senior disciple; my name is Sun Wukong, Sun the Novice, or Brother Monkey. Then he came to Gao Village in the Land of Stubet, where he took his second disciple, called Zhu Bajie, Zhu Wuneng, or Pig. At the Flowing Sands River he took his third disciple, Sha Wujing, or Friar Sand. Then the day before yesterday he took on a lay brother at the Precious Wood Monastery to be our porter."

On hearing all this the fiend, who had no way of searching the Tang Priest, or of using a crafty approach to questioning Monkey, glared angrily and said, "When you left the East you were travelling alone. Of the four followers you picked up the three regular monks are no problem. But I won't stand for your taking that lay brother. I'm sure the fellow was kidnapped. What's he called? Does he have an official ordination license?

Bring him forward to make a statement."

At this the real king began to tremble as the asked, "Master, what shall I say?"

"Don't be afraid," said Monkey, giving him a pinch. "I'll speak for you."

The splendid Great Sage hurried forward and yelled to the fiend at the top of his voice, "Your Majesty, this old lay brother is dumb, and a bit deaf too. But when he was young he once went to the Western Heaven, so he knows the way. I'm very familiar with his background, so I beg Your Majesty in your mercy to allow me to speak on his behalf."

"Unless you want to be punished you'd better make a full and frank statement at once," said the fiend.

To this Monkey said,

"The brother now confessing is getting on in years,

Struck both deaf and dumb, and bankrupt too.

Long have his family lived in this region

Till five years ago catastrophe struck.

No rain fell, and the people suffered drought;

Monarch and commoners all kept and fast.

Incense was burned amid their prayers to Heaven,

But for hundreds of miles no clouds could be seen.

When all of the people were in agonies of hunger,

A wizard from Zhongshan suddenly arrived.

He showed his great powers to bring the wind and rain,

Then secretly murdered the ruler of the country,

Pushed him down the well in the palace's garden,

Took the throne himself in the king's own likeness.

Luckily I came and did a great good deed,

Raising the dead and restoring him to life.

Then he volunteered to act as our porter

And go to the West together with us monks.

The false king is really a very evil wizard;

The lay brother is in fact the true king in disguise."

Hearing this as he sat in his palace's throne hall, the fiend was so frightened that his heart leapt like a little deer, and his face flushed. He drew away at once and was just about to flee, but he was

unarmed. He turned round to see that one of the officers of the palace guard who had a sword at his waist was standing stock – still Chapter 39

like an idiot because Monkey's magic had immobilized him.

The fiend grabbed the sword and rose into the air on a cloud, to the thunderous fury of Friar Sand and loud complaints from Pig about Monkey's impatience: "If you'd taken it a bit more gently you could have calmed him down and got him. If he gets away on his cloud now, where ever will you find him?"

"Stop that awful din, brothers," laughed Monkey. "Let's ask the prince to come down and pay his respects to his father, and invite the queen and the consorts to bow to their husband." He then recited the words to lift the immobilizing spell, and said, "When the officials come to, tell them all to come and pay homage to their sovereign. Then it will be known who is the real king. Tell everyone what has happened so that the truth can be known. I'm off to find the demon." The splendid Great Sage then gave Pig and Friar Sand his parting instructions: "Look after them all – –king and ministers, father and son, queen and consorts, and our master."

By the time he had finished speaking he had already disappeared.

He was already up in the ninth layer of cloud, looking all around for the fiend. He saw that the wretch had got away with his life and was fleeing back to the East. Monkey was soon close behind him and shouting, "Where do you think you're going, monster? Monkey's after you."

The fiend turned to look, raised his sword, and shouted, "You scoundrel, Monkey. It was none of your business that I was sitting on someone else's throne. Why did you have to come here righting wrongs and giving my secret away?"

"I'll get you, you cheeky monster," chuckled Monkey. "Don't imagine you'll ever be a king again. As you knew who I was you should have made yourself scarce instead of giving my master a bad time. What sort of confession were you trying to extort from him? The one you got just now? If you won't go, tough guy, try a taste of my cudgel." The fiend dodged the blow then struck back at Monkey's face with his

sword. Once the two of them were in action it was a splendid fight. Indeed:

Fierce was the Monkey king, and strong the demon monarch,

As cudgel parried sword while they fought against each other.

For one whole day the Three Worlds are in cloud

Just because a monarch recovered his throne."

After a few rounds the fiend realized that he was no match for Monkey and fled back to the city by the way he had come. He rushed through the two lines of civil and military officials before the white jade steps, turned himself into the likeness of the Tang Priest with a shake of his body, and stood holding his hands together before the steps of the throne hall.

When the Great Sage caught the monster up and had raised his cudgel to strike him down the monster said,

"Disciple, it's me, don't hit me." Monkey then raised his cudgel to strike the real Tang Priest, who also said,

"Disciple, it's me, don't hit me." Both Tang Priests were so alike as to be indistinguishable.

"If I kill the Tang Priest who is really the demon in disguise, that will be a great achievement," thought Monkey. "But if I killed my real master that would be terrible." So he had to stay his hand while he asked Pig Chapter 39

and Friar Sand, "Which one is the fiend and which is our master? Point the fiend out to me and I'll kill him."

"You made such a noise when you were fighting up there," said Pig, "that I blinked, and when I opened my eyes again there were two masters. I don't know which is the real one."

As soon as he heard this Monkey made magic with his hands, said the words of the spell, and called on all the devas who guard the dharma, the Six Dings, the Six Jias, the Protectors of the Four Quarters and the Centre, the Four Duty Gods, and the Eighteen Guardians of the Faith,

as well as the local deities and mountain gods:

"I'm here to subdue a demon, but the demon has turned himself into my master. They're so alike I can't tell them apart. As you have secret understanding, please invite my master to enter the throne hall so that I can capture the fiend."

Now the fiend was good at cloud–jumping, and the moment he heard what Monkey was saying he got out by leaping on the roof of the throne hall, so that when Monkey raised his cudgel he struck at the Tang Priest. Oh dear! Had he not called in those gods he would have beaten twenty Tang Priests to pulp there and then.

Luckily the gods blocked his cudgel and said, "Great Sage, the fiend is a cloud–jumper. He's got up on the roof." But as soon as Monkey went up on the roof after him the fiend jumped down again, grabbed hold of the real Tang Priest, and got the two of them muddled up again in the crowds. They were once again indistinguishable.

Monkey was most upset, and on hearing Pig's mocking laughter from beside him he burst into a fury: "What's wrong with you, cretin? You'll have to be at the beck and call of two masters now, so why are you looking so pleased?"

"Call me stupid if you like, brother," laughed Pig, "but you're even sillier than me. If you can't tell which is the master, don't waste your effort trying. If you can bear the headache, ask our master to say the spell. Friar Sand and I will each stand by one of them and listen. The one who doesn't know the words will be the fiend.

What's the problem?"

"Good for you, brother," said Monkey. "Only three people know the words of that spell. They came from the heart of Lord Buddha and were taught to the Bodhisattva Guanyin, who passed them on to our master.

Nobody else knows them. Very well then. Say the spell, Master." The Tang Priest then really did begin to recite it. The fiend, who could not possibly have known the words, could only mumble some gibberish.

"This one here who's mumbling is the fiend," said Pig. Letting go of the monster and raising his rake to strike him with, the fiend leapt up into the air and flew away on a cloud.

With a great shout the splendid Pig mounted another cloud and went

after him. Friar Sand too was so excited that he abandoned the Tang Priest and brandished his own staff for battle. Only then did the Tang Priest stop saying the spell. The Great Sage Monkey grabbed his cudgel and joined in the aerial chase despite his headache. In this fight three ferocious monks had one wretched fiend surrounded. As the fiend was held in check by Pig's rake and Friar Sand's staff, Monkey laughed and said, "I can't go straight up to him and hit him head–on because he's so scared of me that he'd run away. I'll go up higher, turn myself upside–down, and hit him that way."

The Great Sage then sprang up in auspicious light to the ninth layer of cloud, and was just about to deliver his blow when a multicolored cloud appeared to the Northwest and a voice shouted loudly, "Don't hit him, Sun Wukong." Monkey turned round to see that this was the Bodhisattva Manjusri checked his blow at once, and did obeisance.

"Where are you going, Bodhisattva?" he asked.

"I'm here to collect that fiend for you," Manjusri replied. Monkey thanked him for his trouble. Manjusri produced the demon–revealing mirror from his sleeve to reveal the fiend's true form, then Monkey called Pig and Friar Sand to come to greet the Bodhisattva. When they all looked in the mirror they saw that the monster was quite appallingly ugly:

Eyes like glazed dishes,

A head like a steel cauldron.

His whole body blue as indigo in summer,

His claws as white as autumn frosts.

Two floppy ears,

A tail as long as a broom.

Blue hairs bristling with courage,

Red eyes shining with gold.

Flat teeth like jade flagstones,

Round whiskers sticking out like spears.

When his true image is shown in the mirror

He is Manjusri's Lion King.

"Bodhisattva," said Monkey, "he's the blue–haired lion from under your throne. Why did he run away here to be an evil spirit, and why didn't you subdue him before?"

"Wukong," replied the Bodhisattva, "he didn't run away. He was sent here by the Lord Buddha."

"How could the Lord Buddha possibly have sent this beast here to become a spirit and usurp a throne? I could have done with some of his edicts to help me to put up with the misery of escorting the Tang Priest."

"There are some things you don't know," said Manjusri. "That king of Wuji was a benevolent man and used to feast monks. The Lord Buddha sent me here to bring him to the West, where he might become a golden arhat.

Because I could not appear to him in my real form I turned into an ordinary monk and asked him for some vegetarian food. When he was unable to answer some questions I asked he took me for an evildoer, had me tied up, and immersed me in the palace moat for three days. Luckily the Six Jias saved me with their golden bodies and took me back to the West, where I reported to the Tathagata Buddha. It was he who ordered that the king be pushed into the well and soaked for three years as punishment for my three–day soaking. 'Every mouthful we eat or drink is predestined.' By coming here you have now won a great merit."

"You may have repaid your private grudge, like repaying every mouthful, but goodness only knows how many people that monster murdered," replied Monkey.

"He never killed anyone," the Bodhisattva replied. "In the three years since his arrival the winds and rains have come at the right time, the state has been strong and the people have known peace. He did nobody any harm."

"Even if all that is granted," said Monkey, "he's been sleeping with the queen and the consorts in the harem.

Surely this has sullied them and been an affront to morality."

"He has not sullied them at all," the Bodhisattva replied. "He's a gelded lion."

Hearing this Pig went up to the creature and had a feel. "This evil spirit's got a bad reputation he doesn't deserve," he chuckled, "like a teetotaler with a red nose."

"In that case," said Monkey, "take him with you. If you hadn't come, Bodhisattva, I'd never have spared his life."

The Bodhisattva then said a spell and shouted, "Return to the Truth, beast. What are you waiting for?" Only then did the fiend—king return to his original form, Manjusri placed a lotus—blossom over the monster to tame him, sat on his back, and left Monkey amid golden light. Ah!

Manjusri returned to Wutai Mountain

To hear the scriptures taught beneath the lotus throne.

If you don't know how the Tang Priest and his disciples left the city, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 40

The Boy Fools with Transformations, Disturbing the Dhyana Heart Ape and Horse Return with a Knife; the Mother of Wood Is Empty The story goes on to tell how the Great Sage Monkey and his two fellow—disciples landed their clouds and went straight into the palace. Here monarch, ministers, queen and prince bowed to them in thanks, a group at a time, and Monkey told everyone the story of how Manjusri had recovered the demon. They all knelt and bowed to the ground repeatedly.

Amid all the congratulations the gatekeeper came to report, "My lord, there are four more monks at the gates."

This news threw Pig into a panic.

"Brother," he said, "has the fiend used his magic to make a false Manjusri to fool us? Perhaps he's turned into a monk now for another battle of wits with us."

Chapter 40

"Nonsense," said Monkey, ordering that they be summoned inside.

The civil and military officials passed on the order and the monks were sent in. Monkey saw that they were monks from the Precious Wood Monastery bringing the king's crown, jade belt, yellow ochre robe and no-worry shoes.

"Splendid," said Monkey with delight, "splendid." He then asked the lay brothers to step forward, and made the king take off his monastic headcloth and put on his crown, remove his cotton habit and don his robe of yellow ochre, replace his silk belt with the jade belt, and kick off his monastic sandals for his no-worry shoes.

Monkey then told the crown prince to fetch the white jade scepter for his father to hold, and invited the king to enter the throne-hall to rule once more.

As the old saying has it, "The court cannot be without a monarch for a single day." The king refused to sit on the throne, but knelt in the middle of the steps weeping and saying, "Now that you have brought me back to life after I was dead for three years, Master, I can't possibly go on acting as king. Please ask your master to be king. It will be enough for me to take my wives and children to live as a commoner outside the city." Sanzang absolutely refused to take the throne, his heart being utterly set on worshipping the Buddha and fetching the scriptures.

The king then offered the throne to Monkey, who said with a laugh, "I tell you frankly, gentlemen, if I'd wanted to be a king I could have been the king of every country on earth. But we're all used to being monks now-- -it's an easy life. If I were a king I'd have to grow my hair and I wouldn't be able to sleep at dusk or when the drum is beaten for the fifth watch. Whenever there was a report from the frontier I'd be worried, and I'd be distressed and helpless at reports of

famine and disaster. I'd never get used to it. No, you go back to being a king, and I'll carry on and win merit as a monk."

No matter how hard the king tried to refuse he finally had to enter the throne—hall, sit facing South on the throne, and call himself king. He issued a general amnesty, sent the monks of the Precious Wood Monastery back with rich presents, and opened up the Eastern hall of the palace to give a banquet for the Tang Priest. He also sent for painters to paint portraits of the Tang patriarch and his three disciples to hang in the throne hall.

Now that they had restored the country to peace the master and his disciples did not want to stay long; they were eager to take their leave of the king and carry on towards the West. The king, his queen and consorts, the crown prince and the ministers presented the country's greatest treasures as well as gold, silver, silk and satin to the patriarch as tokens of their thanks.

Sanzang accepted none of these gifts but only the return of his passport and urged Monkey and the other two to saddle the horse up and be on their way as soon as possible. The king was most upset. He ordered the state carriage brought out and invited the Tang Priest to ride in it. The two groups of civil and military officials led the way, while the king, his queen and consorts, and the crown prince pushed the wheels of the carriage. Only when they had passed through the outer walls of the city did Sanzang get down from the dragon carriage to take his leave of them all.

"Master," said the king, "please visit our country on your way back after collecting the scriptures in the Western Heaven."

"I hear and obey," replied Sanzang. The king then returned with his ministers, weeping. The Tang Priest and his three disciples made their way along a twisting road, single—minded in their determination to worship at the Vulture Peak. By now autumn was just giving way to winter.

Chapter 40

555

Journey to the West

Bare stand the woods as frost carves out red leaves;

Ample the yellow millet ripened after rain.

Sun – warmed plum trees blossom in the dawn;

Cold sounds the bamboo shaken by the wind.

Master and disciples had now left the kingdom of Wuji. Resting at night and travelling by day, they had been going for the best part of a month when they saw a mountain in front of them that touched the sky and blotted out the sun. Sanzang was alarmed. Reining in the horse he called urgently for Monkey, who asked, "What are your orders, Master?"

"Do you see that big mountain in front of us?" said Sanzang. "It's so sheer that I'm sure there must be evil creatures lurking on it to catch us, so be on your guard."

"Just keep going and don't worry," said Monkey with a laugh. "I'll protect you." With that the venerable elder relaxed and spurred his horse on. When they reached the craggy mountain they saw that it was indeed precipitous:

Is it high?

It touches the azure firmament.

It is deep?

Its chasms open down to hell.

Before the mountain white clouds always billow.

Swirling black mists,

Red – blossoming plums, emerald bamboo,

Green cypresses and bluish pines.

Behind the mountain is a lofty soul – gripping pillar,

Concealing the fantastic caves of monsters.

Springs flow from the caves with cheerful voice,

And down ravines that twist and wind.

Apes swing from the sky to offer fruit;

Stags carry many – branching antlers,

While river deer shyly watch the strangers.

At duck the tigers climb to seek their dens;

Dragons emerge at dawn from out of the waters.

A sudden mighty roar at a cave's mouth

Sends birds noisily aloft with fright.

See how the woodland beasts skulk off.

At the sight of all these birds and beasts

The human heart beats hard in terror.

Spacious as halls are the caves,

All lined up along the peaks;

The granite rocks are coloured like pieces of jade;

Mist covers all as if with greenish gauze.

Master and disciples were already frightened enough when a red cloud emerged from a fold in the mountain and rose straight up into the sky, where it formed a ball of fire. Monkey was horrified. As he went to take a closer look he pushed the master's leg to get him off the horse and said, "Brothers, stay here. An evil spirit's coming." In their alarm Pig grabbed his iron rake and Friar Sand his staff as they stood guard on either side of the Tang Priest.

Here the story divides into two. The red light was indeed from an evil spirit who had heard tell some years earlier that a Tang Priest from the East, a reincarnation of the Venerable Golden Cicada and a holy man who had cultivated his conduct through ten successive lives, was going to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures. Anyone who ate a piece of his flesh would live as long as heaven and earth. The evil spirit had been longing day in and day out for him to arrive, and now he was here. As the evil spirit looked at them from mid – air he saw the three disciples ready for action as they guarded the Tang Priest on

his horse. The spirit was full of admiration.

"Now there's a monk for you," he said to himself. "I can just make out a fat, white–faced monk riding a horse.

That must be the holy Tang Priest. But why is he surrounded by those three hideous monks? They've all clenched their fists, their sleeves are rolled up, and they're armed. They look as if they're ready for a fight. I wonder if any of them is sharp–eyed enough to see what I am? Looking the way that I do I haven't a hope of eating the Tang Priest's flesh."

After he had been arguing it over for some time he said to himself, "If I try swooping down to grab him I won't get anywhere near him. I'll only get him if I trick him through cunning. Once I've hoodwinked him I can think of some crafty scheme that's bound to catch him. So I'll go down and try a few games with him."

Chapter 40

The splendid evil monster then dispersed his red light and brought his cloud down to land on the mountainside, where he turned himself with a shake of his body into a naughty boy of six, stark naked, tied hand and foot to the top of a pine tree, and shouting, "Help, help!"

When the Great Sage Monkey looked up again and saw that the red cloud and the fire had completely disappeared he told the master to remount and be on his way again.

"But you said an evil spirit was here; I don't dare move," replied Sanzang.

"Just now I saw a red cloud rise up from the ground," said Monkey, "and turn into a ball of fire in mid–air. It was certainly an evil spirit. As the fire and the cloud have now gone I think it must just have been passing by and wasn't going to do us any harm. Let's go."

"You make it sound all very convincing," said Pig, "but who ever heard of an evil spirit that just passed by?"

"You wouldn't know," replied Monkey. "If the demon king of some mountain cave has invited the spirits from all the other caves in the

mountains to a banquet, then the spirits from all around would be heading there.

They'd be much more interested in the feast than in doing anyone any harm. That must have been a passing spirit."

Sanzang was only half–convinced, but he remounted and continued along the path up the mountain. On his way he heard a shout of "Help!" and said to his disciple with shock, "Disciple, what's that cheer in the middle of these mountains?"

"You just keep going, Master," said Monkey, coming up to him. "Stop worrying about chairs, whether they're carried by people or mules, or whether they're open–topped or litters. Even if there were a chair here there'd be nobody to carry it for you."

"I'm not talking about chairs for carrying but about cheers," said Sanzang. "I know," said Monkey, "but it's no concern of yours. You just keep going."

Sanzang did as he was told and whipped his horse forward. About a quarter of a mile later he heard another shout of "Help!"

"Disciple," he said, "that's no goblin or demon shouting. If it were there'd be no echo. Listen to those shouts, one after another. I'm sure it's someone in trouble. We must go to the rescue."

"Master," said Monkey, "let's have a bit less of that compassion until we've crossed the mountain. Then you can be as compassionate as you like. This is an evil place. You must have heard how things can become spirits just as creepers attach themselves to trees. Most of them are no trouble, but there's one kind of python that's developed its powers for so long that it's become a spirit. It's got an amazing knowledge of the names people had as children. If you don't reply when it calls your name out from the undergrowth or from a mountain hollow you'll be fine; but if you answer a single word it'll grab your soul and will surely come and kill you the next night. Move! If you get away you can thank you lucky stars, as the saying goes. Whatever you do, ignore it."

The venerable elder still had no choice but to obey and whip his horse on. "I don't know where that damned monster is," thought Monkey. "He just keeps on shouting. I'll have to use separating magic to keep him and the master apart." The splendid Great Sage then called Friar Sand to him and said, "Lead the horse on slowly while I take a piss." Watch Monkey as he lets the Tang Priest get several paces ahead, says

a spell to move mountains and make land shrink, and points behind him with his cudgel. Once master and disciples were over Chapter 40

the peak they would have left this demon behind. He then hurried to catch up with the Tang Priest and press on up the mountain. But Sanzang heard another cry of "Help!" from the other side of the mountain.

"Disciple," he said, "that poor person is very unlucky to have missed us. We've passed him now. Can't you hear him shouting on the other side of the mountain?"

"If he's around he must still be on this side," said Pig. "It's just that the wind has changed."

"Never you mind about whether the wind has changed or not," said Monkey. "Keep moving." From then on they all stopped talking and wished they could step over the mountain with a single stride.

The story switches back to the evil spirit, whose three or four shouts had found no response. "I've been waiting for the Tang Priest here," he thought, "and I saw that he was only about a mile away. I wonder why he's still not here after all this time. He must have taken a short cut." He then braced himself, slipped out of his bonds, and went up into the air again in his red light to take another look. He did not notice when the Great Sage looked up at him, recognized him as an evil spirit, and pushed the Tang Priest by his foot off the horse once more. "Brothers," said Monkey, "be very careful. The evil spirit's coming back." Again Pig and Friar Sand placed themselves on either side of the Tang Priest to protect him with their rake and staff.

The spirit was full of praise for all this as he noticed it from mid–air: "What fine monks! I saw the fat, white–faced one on the horse before: why have the other three hidden him? I'd better take a closer look to find out. I'll have to get rid of the sharp–eyed one first before I can catch the Tang Priest. Otherwise I'll have Wasted my worry without any gain,

Been to that trouble, and yet all in vain."

Once more he brought the cloud down, made the same transformation that he had the previous time, and waited at the top of a pine tree.

This time he was only a few hundred yards away from them.

When the Great Sage Sun looked up yet again and saw that the red cloud had dispersed he once more asked the master to remount and press on. "But you told me the evil spirit was back," said Sanzang, "so why do you want me to keep going?"

"It was another passing one, and it won't dare try to harm us," Monkey replied. At this the venerable elder lost his temper.

"Damned monkey. You keep trying to make a fool of me. When there really are evil monsters you say there's no problem, but in a quiet, peaceful place like this you keep giving me terrible frights by shouting about evil spirits. If I were to fall and injure myself I would certainly not forgive you. It's outrageous."

"Don't be cross with me, Master," said Monkey. "Even if you did hurt a hand or a foot in a fall it could be cured easy enough. But if an evil spirit got you I wouldn't know where to look for you." Sanzang, who was by now in a raging fury, was only dissuaded from saying the Band－tightening Spell by Friar Sand's entreaties.

Yet again he remounted to carry on with his journey.

Chapter 40

He was not even settled in the saddle when he heard another call of "Help, master!" He looked up to see a little boy hanging naked in a tree. Reining in his horse he started to abuse Monkey again: "You damned scoundrel, ape. There's not a shred of kindness in you. All you can think of is wickedness and murder. I told you it was a human voice, but you kept yelling over and over again that it was a monster. Can't you see the boy in the tree?" As the master was so angry Monkey sneaked a glance at him and saw what sort of expression he was wearing. Then he bowed his head and made no reply, firstly because there was nothing he could do, and secondly because he was afraid that the master might say the spell.

When the Tang Priest reached the foot of the tree he pointed at the boy with his riding crop and asked, "Who are your parents? Why are you hanging up there? Tell me and I will save you." Oh dear! He was truly an evil spirit to make himself look like that, but the master only

had mortal, fleshly eyes and could not see what he was.

The evil spirit put on even more of an act on hearing these question. "Master," he called, tears pouring down,

"I live in the village by Withered Pine Ravine to the West of the mountain. My grandfather was known as Millionaire Hong because he had such a huge fortune. He died a long time ago and left everything to my father. Nowadays we throw our money around and we're not nearly as rich any more. That's why my father's called Hundred Thousand Hong. All he likes doing is making friends with all the big shots around and lending his gold and silver out at interest. But they were crooks who swindled him out of the lot, and he lost both capital and interest. My father swore never to lend out another penny. Then the people who borrowed from him became so desperate with poverty that they formed a gang. They attacked us in broad daylight with fire and weapons, stole all our goods, and killed my father. Because my mother is so beautiful they carried her off to be the bandit chief's woman. She couldn't bear to leave me behind, so she hid me in her clothes and went weeping and trembling with the bandits. When they got to this mountain the bandits wanted to kill me. They only spared me from the sword because of my mother's desperate pleas. Instead they tied me to this tree to die of cold and hunger. I don't know where the bandits have taken my mother. I've been hanging up here for three days and nights, and you're the first people to come past. I must have earned merit in a previous life to have met you in this one, Master. If in your great compassion you can rescue me and take me home I'd gladly sell myself into slavery in order to repay you. I won't forget what you've done for me even when I'm buried."

Taking all this for the truth, Sanzang told Pig to undo the ropes and bring the boy down. The idiot, not realizing who he was, was just about to start doing it. This was more than Monkey could bear.

"Damned beast," he shouted, "there's someone here who can see what you are. Cut out all that nonsense, and stop trying to fool us. If all your family's goods have been stolen, your father has been murdered and your mother kidnapped, then who are we going to hand you to after we rescue you? What sort of reward will you give us? It doesn't hang together. It's a pack of lies."

This frightened the evil spirit, who realized now that Monkey was an able opponent and was keeping an eye on him. So he trembled and wept as he continued, "Although I've lost both my parents and all my family's goods I've still got all our land and my other relations."

"What relations?" Monkey asked.

"My other grandfather lives to the South of the mountain," the evil spirit replied, "and my aunt's home is North of the ridge. Li the Fourth from the head of the ravine is married to my aunt, and Hong the Third in the woods is a distant uncle. I've also got cousins living around the village. If the venerable master will save me and take me back to the village and my relations I'll tell them all about the venerable master's kindness in rescuing me. I'll mortgage or sell some land, and reward you richly."

Chapter 40

At this Pig blocked Monkey's way and said, "Brother, you can't interrogate a little boy like that. He told you that the bandits only took his moveable goods— —how could they have possibly taken his houses and land? If he tells his relations all about it the most we'll eat will be an acre and a half's worth, no matter how big our appetites are. Let's save him." All the idiot could think about was his stomach. He did not care at all whether he was acting wisely as he cut through the ropes with his monk's knife and let the demon down from the tree.

The demon then kept kowtowing and weeping copiously in front of the Tang Priest's horse. The tenderhearted priest said, "Come up on the horse, boy, and I'll carry you with me."

"Master," said the boy, "my hands and feet are numb after hanging by them for so long, and my back is hurting too. Besides, we villagers don't know how to ride." The Tang Priest then told Pig to carry the evil spirit, who stole a quick look at Pig and said, "Master, my skin is so tender after being frozen that I couldn't bear to have this gentleman carrying me. His long snout, big ears and the bristles on the back of his head would stick into me something terrible."

"Friar Sand," said the Tang Priest, "you carry him."

The boy then took a glance at Friar Sand and said, "Master, when the bandits raided our house they gave me a terrible fright. They were all made up like actors, wore false beards, and carried sticks and swords. The sight of that evil—looking reverend gentleman scares the wits out of me. I wouldn't dare let him carry me." The Tang Priest then told Monkey to carry the boy, to which Monkey agreed with a chuckle.

The monster concealed his delight as he docilely let Monkey carry him. Monkey pulled him over to the side of the path and tried him for weight.

The boy was only about three pounds ten ounces heavy. "Damn you, you demon," said Monkey, "you die today. How dare you try your tricks on me! I know that you're one of those."

"I'm the son of a good family who's had the bad luck to meet with disaster," protested the demon. "What do you mean by calling me 'one of those?'"

"If you're the son of a good family," said Monkey, "then why are your bones so light?"

"I have very small bones," said the demon.

"How old are you?" Monkey asked.

"Six this year," the demon replied.

"You still ought to put on at least a pound a year," said Monkey with a smile. "You should weigh at least six pounds: how come you're less than four?"

"I wasn't breastfed as a baby," said the demon.

"Very well then," said Monkey, "I'll carry you. But mind you warn me if you need to piss or shit." Sanzang then pressed ahead with Pig and Friar Sand while Monkey brought up the rear with the demon on his back.

They carried on towards the West, as this poem proves:

High fiendish dangers face high virtue;

The stillness of meditation gives rise to evil spirits.

Chapter 40

561

Journey to the West

When the Heart Lord is upright and takes the middle way,

Wood's mother foolishly treads the wrong path.

The Thought–horse silently nurses desires,

The Yellow Wife wordlessly worries and grieves.

When the stranger prospers he rejoices in vain;

From just this place must one vanish.

As the Great Sage Monkey carried the evil spirit he felt very resentful of the Tang Priest for not realizing how hard the going was for him. "It would be bad enough to cross these high mountains empty–handed, but he has to make me carry someone else too. Even if this wretch is a good boy and not an evil spirit, he's lost his parents and I don't know who I should take him to. Best thing would be to dash him to the ground and finish him off."

The demon knew what Monkey was thinking, so he drew in four deep breaths from all around then blew them out again on Monkey's back, which made Monkey feel he weighed a thousand pounds.

"You're using extra–weight magic to weigh me down, my lad," laughed Monkey. This made the monster afraid that Monkey was going to kill him, so he got his spirit out of his body and sprang up into the ninth layer of cloud. Now that Monkey was finding the load on his back even heavier he grabbed the boy and smashed him so hard against a rock by the path that the boy's body looked like minced pork. Then, just to make sure that the boy would give no more trouble, Monkey tore off all four of his limbs and ripped them into little pieces that he scattered on both sides of the path.

At this the demon, who was watching from mid–air, could hold back his fiery temper no longer. "This ape of a monk is thoroughly vicious," he said. "Evil spirit wanting to kill your master I may be, but I've not yet laid my hands on him. How could you butcher me so atrociously? If I hadn't anticipated and got my spirit out you'd have slaughtered me in cold blood. I'm going to catch the Tang Priest here and now. If I delay any longer, he will become too clever."

The splendid evil spirit then conjured up a whirlwind in mid–air. It was a terrible one that sent stones and dust flying. What a splendid wind:

The bowling whirlwind carried a stench over clouds and water;

The sun and moon were blacked out by its pall.

The trees along the ridge were soon uprooted;

The flowering plums were flattened, trunks and all.

Chapter 40

562

Journey to the West

Sand – blinded travelers could barely walk along;

The paths were blocked by many a crashing rock.

Its swirling mass made all the earth seem dark;

The mountain creatures screamed and howled from shock.

It blew so hard that Sanzang could barely stay on his horse, Pig could not look straight ahead, and Friar Sand had to bend and cover his face. Realizing that this was a devil's wind, the Great Sage rushed forward to catch them up, but the demon had already scooped the Tang Priest up in his wind. Sanzang had disappeared without a trace. Nobody could tell where he had been taken or where to start looking for him.

Before long the wind fell and the sun was shining again. Monkey went up and saw that the white dragon horse was trembling and neighing. The luggage had been thrown into the path, Pig was hiding under a crag and whimpering, and Friar Sand was squatting howling on the mountainside.

"Pig!" shouted Monkey, and recognizing his voice the idiot looked up to see that the storm was over.

He climbed to his feet, grabbed hold of Monkey, and said, "What a wind."

Friar Sand came forward too and said, "That was a twister, brother. But where's the master?"

"The wind blew so hard," said Pig, "that we all had to hide our heads, close our eyes and take cover. The master lay down on the horse's back."

"But where's he gone now?" Monkey asked.

"He must have been blown away by the wind as if he were made of rushes," replied Friar Sand.

"Well, brothers, we might as well split up here and now," said Monkey.

"Yes," said Pig, "the sooner the better. It would be a very good idea if we all went our separate ways. This journey to the Western Heaven is endless. We'll never get there." Hearing them saying this made Friar Sand shudder and turn numb.

"Brothers, what terrible things to say," he said. "We all committed crimes in our earlier lives and were converted by the Bodhisattva Guanyin who administered the vows to us and gave us our Buddhist names. We all adopted the Buddhist faith and volunteered to protect the Tang Priest on his journey to the West to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. This is how we are going to atone for our crimes. If we give up here and talk about going our separate ways we'll fail to do the good deeds the Bodhisattva asked of us and we'll disgrace ourselves. People will jeer at us and say that we've got no staying power."

"You're right, brother," said Monkey. "But why wouldn't the master do as he was told? My fiery eyes and golden pupils can tell good from evil. The whirlwind just now was caused by the boy who was hanging in the tree. I could see he was an evil spirit, but neither of you nor the master could. He thought the boy was the son of a good family and made me carry him. Just when I'd decided to get rid of him he used his magic to make Chapter 40

himself heavier and weigh me right down, so I smashed him to bits. I reckon he must have used his powers to escape from his body, call up the whirlwind and carry the master off. If only the master hadn't always ignored my advice. That's why I was so discouraged and said that we ought to split up. I accept your sincere advice, brother, but I don't know what to do. What do you suggest, Pig?"

"What I said just now was nonsense," said Pig. "I was talking off the top of my head. Of course we shouldn't split up. Brother, we'll just have to do as Friar Sand says, find the monster and save our master."

"Yes, brother," said Monkey cheerfully, his anger now gone, "let's all pull together. Get the baggage and the horse ready, and we'll go up the mountain to find the demon and save our master."

The three of them pulled themselves up the mountainside and across ravines with the help of creepers, covering about twenty miles without finding any trace of the demon. The mountain was completely without birds and beasts, but there was many a tall pine. By now Monkey was really anxious, so he sprang up on a craggy peak, shouted, "Change!" and gave himself three heads and six arms, so that he looked just as he had when he made havoc in Heaven. Then he shook his gold-banded cudgel so that there were three of that too.

With much whacking and thwacking he lashed out wildly to the East and to the West, clearing paths both ways.

"This is terrible, brother," said Pig to Friar Sand. "Monkey'll never find the master this way--he's just in a furious temper."

Monkey's lashing about flushed out a whole crowd of poverty-stricken local gods dressed in rags and tatters, with no seats to their breeches or legs to their trousers. They all knelt on the mountain slope and said, "Great Sage, we mountain gods and local deities pay our respects."

"Why are there so many of you?" Monkey asked.

"Great Sage," they replied, kowtowing, "this mountain is known as Mount Hao. It measures two hundred miles around. As there is a mountain god and a local deity every three miles or so that makes thirty mountain gods and thirty local deities. We heard yesterday that you were coming, Great Sage, but we have been late greeting you because we could not all assemble quickly enough. That is why the Great Sage has been so angry. We beg him to forgive us."

"I'll let you off this time," said Monkey, "but I've got something to ask you: how many evil spirits are there on this mountain?"

"Just one, lord and master," they replied, "but he's really beggared us. We get hardly any incense or paper offerings burnt for us now, and no food or blood at all. We have to go hungry and naked. How many evil spirits could we possibly support?"

"Which side of the mountain does he live on?" Monkey asked.

"Neither," they said. "In the middle of the mountain there's a ravine called the Withered Pine Ravine, and beside it there's a cave called the Fire-cloud Cave. In the cave lives a demon king who has tremendous magic powers. He's always capturing us mountain gods and local deities to tend his kitchen fire and watch his door, or to make us carry

bells and shout to clear the way for him at night. And the little devils expect us to make regular payments to them too."

"You are all gods from the spirit world, so where can you get money from?" Monkey asked.

Chapter 40

564

Journey to the West

"We haven't any," the gods replied, "we have to muster all of us spirits morning and evening to catch a few deer, and if we haven't anything to offer, they'll come to tear down our shrines and take off our own clothes.

He's made life impossible for us. We beg and beseech you to rid us of this monster and save all the spirits of these mountains."

"As he controls you and you are always going to his cave you must know where he's from and what he's called," said Brother Monkey.

"When we tell you we're sure you will have heard of him, Great Sage," they replied. "He's the son of the Bull Demon King by Raksasi. He cultivated his conduct for three hundred years in the Fiery Mountains and developed True Samadhi Fire. His powers are tremendous. The Bull Demon King sent him here to hold this mountain. His name is Red Boy, and his title is Boy Sage King."

This was good news for Monkey, who dismissed the local deities and mountain gods, resumed his original form, and jumped down from the peak. "Relax, brothers," he said to Pig and Friar Sand, "no need to worry any more. The master won't possibly be killed. The evil spirit is a relation of mine."

"Stop lying, brother," said Pig. "This is the Western Continent of Cattle－gift, and you come from the Eastern Continent of Superior Body. They're a very long way apart, with thousands of mountains and rivers between them, to say nothing of a couple of oceans. So how could he possibly be a relation of yours?"

"The crowd that turned up just now were the local deities and mountain gods from round here. When I asked them for some background on the demon they told me he is Red Boy, the son of the Bull Demon King by Raksasi, and he's also known as the Boy Sage

King. When I made havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago I visited all the famous mountains and people of distinction in the world. The Bull Demon King took me as his seventh sworn younger brother. There were six demon kings altogether, and the only reason why I was prepared to call the Bull Demon King my elder brother was because I was a bit smaller than him. So as this devil is the Bull Demon King's son and I know his father, I'm his uncle. That means he couldn't possibly harm my master. I must be off straight away."

"But, brother," said Pig with a laugh, "three years without paying a visit and relations are no longer relations, as the saying goes. You haven't seen him for five or six hundred years. You haven't even had a drink together or invited him over on holidays. There's no way he'll still treat you as a relation."

"What a way to judge people," said Brother Monkey. "As another saying goes, Every piece of duckweed floats down to the sea;

People will always meet each other somewhere.

Even if he doesn't regard me as a relation any more, at any rate he won't harm the master. I don't expect him to treat me to a slap－up meal, but he's bound to give me the Tang Priest back in one piece." The three brother－disciples, their minds once more turned to pious thoughts, led the white horse loaded with the luggage along the path.

Without caring whether it was day or night they had covered some forty miles when they saw a pine woods through which a stream flowed in a twisting ravine. The water was green and pure, and at the head of the Chapter 40

ravine was a stone bridge leading to a cave. "Brother," said Monkey, "I'm sure the evil spirit must live in that rock－face over there. Let's have a council of war to decide who looks after the luggage and the horse and who comes with me to subdue the demon."

"Brother," said Pig, "I'm no good at hanging around. I'll come with you."

"Fine," said Monkey, continuing, "Friar Sand, hide the horse and the luggage deep in the woods and guard them carefully while we two go there to look for the master." Friar Sand did as he was told, while

Monkey and Pig went fully armed to the cave. Indeed:

The vicious fire of a raw child won;

Mind – ape and Mother of Wood both helped.

If you don't know whether things turned out for good or for ill, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 41

The Mind – Ape Is Defeated by Fire

The Mother of Wood Is Captured by a Demon

Good and evil are quickly forgotten,

Flowering and fading are of no concern.

When perception is half – revealed it may sink or swim;

Follow fate and take your food and drink when they come.

Divine peace is still and solitary;

Stupidity is open to devilish attack.

The Five Elements smash the woods of contemplation;

When the wind blows it is bound to be cold.

The story tells how the Great Sage Monkey took his leave of Friar Sand and led Pig with him as he sprang across the Withered Pine Creek and headed straight for the demon's crag. There was indeed a cave in it, and it was no ordinary sight.

When returning along one's old route in mysterious silence,

The call of the crane is heard in the wind and moonlight.

White clouds bathe the river in brightness;

The waters under the bridge make one think of immortals.

Apes and birds cry out amid exotic plants;

Creepers cover the steps; magic mushrooms flourish.

Dark green floats among crags as mists disperse;

Turquoise touches the pines when a phoenix alights.

The distant line of peaks looks just like a screen;

In the folds of the mountain an immortal's cave is formed.

In this branch of the Kunlun Range are dragons born;

Only those fated to do so can enjoy this beauty.

As they approached the gate they saw a stone tablet on which was carved in big letters, FIRE—WIND CAVE, WITHERED PINE RAVINE, MOUNT HAO. To the other side a crowd of little demons were sparring with sword and spear, leaping through the air, and generally enjoying themselves. "Little ones," shouted Monkey at the top of his voice, "tell your ruler at once that if he brings my master the Tang Priest out I'll spare all your lives, but that if so much as a hint of a 'no' comes out between his teeth I'll turn your mountain upside—down and trample your cave flat." Hearing this, the little demons all scurried back into the cave, shut the doors, and went in to report, "Trouble, Your Majesty."

The monster had carried Sanzang into the cave, stripped him, tied his hands and feet together, and sent little devils to fetch clean water to wash him with. He was going to put Sanzang into a steaming tray to cook, but when the alarm was raised he forgot about washing Sanzang, rushed into the main hall, and asked, "What trouble?"

"There's a monk with a hairy face as ugly as a thunder—god. He's got another monk with a long snout and big ears. He's demanding their master, who's called the Tang Priest or something, and he says that if there's so much as a hint of a 'no' he'll turn the mountain upside—down and trample the cave flat."

"They must be Sun the Novice and Pig," said the demon king with a cruel laugh. "They were bound to come looking for their master. But I carried their master fifty miles from the middle of the mountains to here. How did they find their way here?" The monster then told his

carters to push the carts out, and the little devils responsible did so, opening up the front gates.

Chapter 41

"Brother," said Pig when he saw them, "I think they're so scared of us that they've brought their carts out and are going to move away."

"No," said Monkey. "Look——they're leaving them there." The little devils set the carts out in the order of the Five Elements——metal, wood, water, fire and earth——checked them over, and went back inside to report.

"Ready?" the demon king asked.

"Ready," they replied.

"Fetch my spear," said the demon king, and two of the little devils from the armory carried in an eighteen—foot long fire—tipped spear that they handed to their king. The king tried out a few swings and thrusts with the spear. He wore no helmet or armor, just a battle—kilt of embroidered brocade around his waist, as he went out barefoot through the gates. When Monkey and Pig looked up at him they saw that the monster had:

A face as pale as if powdered,

Lips as red as from lipstick.

Hair in two tufts looking darker than indigo,

A clear—cut brow like a crescent moon.

His kilt was embroidered with phoenix and dragon,

He looked like Nezha, but a little plumper.

In his hands he wielded an awe—inspiring spear,

As he came out through the gates, protected by his aura.

When he roared it echoed like thunder,

And the glare of his eyes flashed like lightning.

If you would know this demon's true name,

He was the Red Boy of undying renown.

The Red Boy came out shouting, "Who's making that row?"

Monkey went closer, smiled and said, "Don't put on such an act, dear nephew. At the top of that pine tree this morning you were a skinny, jaundiced little baby, and you fooled my master. I carried you in all kindness, but you made a whirlwind and took my master off. Now you're putting on this big show, but I know who you are.

Bring my master out at once if you don't want me to forget our kinship and turn nasty. I wouldn't like your respected father to think of me as a disgraceful bully." These words threw the demon into, a fury.

"Vicious ape," he roared, "you're no relation of mine. You're talking a load of nonsense. You've got no reason to claim that I'm your nephew."

"You wouldn't know about it, lad," said Monkey. "When your respected father and I were sworn brothers you hadn't even been thought of."

"Rubbish, you baboon," said the demon. "Think where you come from and where I come from. How could you ever have been my father's sworn brother?"

"You'd know nothing about it," said Monkey. "I'm Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who made havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago. Before that I roamed all over the seas and the sky and visited all of the four continents. In those days I was a great admirer of true heroes. Your respected father, the Bull Demon King, had the tide of Great Sage Matching Heaven. He took me as his seventh brother, and I let him be the eldest brother. There were also the Salamander Demon King, the Great Sage Overturning the Sea, who was our second brother. The Roc Demon King was the Great Sage Throwing Heaven into Confusion and third brother. Fourth brother

was the Camel King, the Great Sage Who Moves Mountains. The Macaque King, our fifth brother, was the Great Sage Who Travels with the Wind; and the sixth brother was the Lion King – – his title was Great Sage Who Drives the Gods Away. As I was the smallest I was the seventh brother, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. When we brothers were having a fine old time back in those days you hadn't even been born."

The demon, refusing to believe a word of this, raised his fire – tipped spear to thrust at Monkey. With the unhurried ease of a true expert Monkey avoided the spear – thrust, swung his iron cudgel, and insulted him:

"You don't know when you're out – classed, you little demon. Take this!"

The evil spirit also moved out of the way and said, "Times have changed and you've been left behind, vicious ape. Take this!" There was no more talk of their kinship as the pair of them showed their magic powers in great anger. They leapt into mid – air, and it was a fine duel:

Monkey was very famous,

The demon king was powerful.

One held a gold – banded cudgel before him,

The other thrust with a fire – tipped spear.

The fogs they breathed out darkened the three worlds;

They snorted out clouds that covered the four quarters.

It was a day of terror and of murderous shouts,

When sun, moon and stars could not be seen.

In speech neither yielded an inch;

Both were unreasonable by nature.

One was a discourteous bully,

The other forgot the obligations of kinship.

The parrying cudgel made one mightier;

The thrusting spear showed the other's savagery.

One was a true Great Sage from Primal Chaos,

The other was the page Sudhana.

The pair of them strove for supremacy,

All because the Tang Priest would worship the Buddha.

While the evil spirit fought twenty rounds with Monkey without result Pig could see clearly from the sidelines that although the demon had not been defeated he was only holding Monkey at bay and had no hope of making an attack on him. And although Monkey had not yet beaten the demon, he was wielding his cudgel with such consummate skill that he kept striking at the demon's head without ever missing his aim.

"This is no good," thought Pig. "Monkey's a slippery customer, and if he shows the monster an opening and gets the demon to charge, Monkey'll finish him off with one blow of his cudgel and there'll be no glory for me." Watch Pig as he summons up his spirit, raises the nine－pronged rake, and brings it down from mid－air towards the demon's head. This gave the demon so bad a fright that he fled in defeat.

"After him," shouted Monkey, "after him."

The pair of them chased him to the mouth of the cave, where the demon stood on the middle one of the five little carts, brandishing his fire－tipped spear with one hand, and clenching the other into a fist with which he punched himself twice on the nose. "Shameless thing," laughed Pig, "punching yourself on the nose to make it bleed, then wiping the blood all over your face. Are you going to bring a lawsuit against us?"

But when the demon hit his nose twice he also said a spell and breathed out fire, while he snorted thick clouds of smoke from his nose. In the wink of an eye flames were everywhere. Fire poured from the five carts. After the demon had blown a few more times a great

fire was leaping up to the sky, blotting out the Fire–cloud Cave. Heaven and earth were both engulfed in the blaze. "Brother," said Pig in horror, "this is terrible. Once in that fire that would be the end of you. I'd be baked, and he'd only need to add a few spices to make a meal of me. Let's get out of here." At that he fled back across the ravine, ignoring Monkey.

Monkey's magical powers really were very great. Making a fire avoidance spell with his fingers he plunged into the flames in pursuit of the demon. Seeing Monkey coming after him the demon breathed out yet more fire, which was even worse than ever. That fire

Fiercely blazing filled the sky,

Covered the earth with a terrible red,

Flew up and down like a fire–wheel,

Danced East and West like sparks.

This was not the fire of the Firemaker rubbing wood,

Or of Lao Zi heating his elixir furnace,

Not a heavenly fire,

Or a prairie fire,

But the True Samadhi Fire the demon had refined.

The five carts combined the Five Elements,

And the fire was formed from their transformations.

The wood of the liver can make the heart fire blaze;

The fire of the heart can settle the spleen's earth.

Spleen's earth gives rise to metal, which turns to water,

And water gives birth to wood, completing the magic cycle.

To fire are due all births and transformations;

It makes all things to flourish throughout space.

The evil spirit had long learned to breathe Samadhi Fire;

He was for ever the first lord of the West.

Monkey could not find the monster amid the raging flames, or even see the way to the mouth of the cave, so he sprang back out of the fire. The demon, who could see all this clearly from the entrance to the cave, put his fire – making equipment away when he knew Monkey had gone, led his devilish horde back inside the cave, and shut the stone doors. He felt he had won a victory, so he told his underlings to lay on a banquet. There was music and much rejoicing, of which we will not speak.

Instead we return to Monkey, who had leapt back across the Withered Pine Ravine and brought his cloud down to land where he could hear Pig and Friar Sand talking loudly and clearly among the pines.

He went up to them and shouted at Pig, "You're no man, you cretin. You were so scared of the demon's fire that you ditched me and fled for your life. But I've long had a trick or two up my sleeve."

"Brother," laughed Pig, "that monster was quite right when he said that you're not up to it any more. As the old saying goes,

Only the man who can meet today's need

May be acclaimed as a hero Indeed:

That demon was no relation of yours, but you tried to force him to take you for one; and when it came to a fight he set off all that terrible fire. Instead of running away are you going to get stuck into another fight with him?"

"How do the monster's fighting powers compare with mine?" Monkey asked.

"He's no match for you," said Pig.

"What's he like with his spear?"

"No good either," replied Pig. "When I saw that he was barely holding out I took a swipe at him to help you.

He wouldn't play and ran away. Then he cheated and set that fire going."

"You shouldn't have come," said Monkey. "It would be best if I had a few more rounds with him and caught him a crafty one with my cudgel!" The two of them then fell to discussing the demon's skill and his terrible fire while Friar Sand leaned against a pine trunk, grinning broadly.

"What are you grinning at, brother," asked Monkey when he noticed. "Don't tell me you've got some power with which to capture the demon and defeat his magic fire. If you had, you'd be helping all of us. As the saying goes, 'many hands make light work.' If you can capture the demon and rescue the master you'll have something very fine to your credit."

"I've got no magic powers," said Friar Sand, "and I can't subdue demons. I was just smiling at the way you two were getting so desperate."

"What do you mean?" Monkey asked.

"The demon's no match for either you in magic or at fighting," said Friar Sand. "The only reason you can't beat him is because of his fire. If you took my advice you could catch him easily by using the principle of the elements overcoming each other."

At this Monkey chuckled aloud and said, "You're right. We were so desperate we forgot about that. On the principle of the elements overcoming each other we'll have to beat fire with water. The question is, where do we get the water to put that fire out and rescue the master?"

"Yes," said Friar Sand, "and we mustn't waste any time."

"You two stay here," said Monkey, "but don't get into a fight with him. I'll go and borrow some dragon soldiers from the Eastern Ocean to bring water to douse the devil fire."

"Off you go, brother," said Pig, "and don't worry. We know what to do."

The splendid Great Sage took his cloud far away. In a moment he was at the Eastern Ocean, but he had no interest in admiring the seascape as he parted the waves with water–repelling magic. As he was going through the water he met a patrolling yaksha, who hurried back into the water–crystal palace to report to the Senior Dragon King Ao Guang. Ao Guang came out to welcome Monkey at the head of his dragon sons and grandsons and his shrimp and crab soldiers. The dragon king invited Monkey to come in and sit down. When the courtesies were over the king offered Monkey some tea.

"Please don't bother," said Monkey. "But there is something else I've come to trouble you with. My master the Tang Priest has been captured on his way to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. He's been caught by an evil spirit called the Red Boy, the Boy Sage King, from the Fire–cloud Cave by Withered Pine Ravine on Mount Hao. I went into the cave to look for my master and fight the demon, but the demon started a great fire. It was too much for me. I thought that as water overcomes fire I'd come here to ask you for some water. Could you make a torrential downpour for me that would put the fire out and save the Tang Priest?"

"You've come to the wrong place," said the dragon king. "I'm not the person to ask for rain."

"But you're the dragon king of the four oceans," said Monkey, "the lord of rain. If I don't ask you who else should I ask?"

"I am in charge of rain," replied the dragon king, "but I can't do anything without authorization. I must have permission from the Jade Emperor as to where and when and how many inches of rain I should pour down, and I've to get a lot of official signatures before I can ask the help of Grandpa Thunder, Mother Lightning, Uncle Wind and the Cloud Boys. As the saying goes, dragons can't travel without cloud."

"But I don't need wind, clouds, thunder or lightning," said Monkey. "All I want is some rain to put the fire out."

"You may not need wind, clouds, thunder or lightning, Great Sage," said the dragon king, "but I can't help you alone. What would you say if I asked my younger brothers too?"

"Where are they?" Monkey asked. "Ao Qin is Dragon King of the Southern Sea, Ao Run is Dragon King of the Northern Sea, and Ao Shun is Dragon King of the Western Sea."

"It'd be easier to go up to Heaven and ask the Jade Emperor for an edict than to trek round all three seas,"

replied Monkey with a laugh. "No need for you to go, Great Sage," said the dragon king. "If I beat my iron drum and bronze bell they'll be here this instant."

"Please sound them at once, Senior Dragon King," said Monkey.

A moment later the three other dragon kings came crowding in. "Elder brother," they asked, "what orders do you have for us?"

"The Great Sage Monkey is here to borrow some rain to help him subdue a demon," said the Senior Dragon King. After the greetings were over Monkey explained why he needed water. The dragons were all delighted to comply. They mustered the following:

The brave Shark as the vanguard,

With big-mouthed Hemibagrus to the fore;

Marshal Carp who plunges through the waves,

Commander Bream who spews out mists.

Colonel Mackerel to patrol the East,

Major Culler to advance to the West.

The Cavalryman Red Eye gallops to the South,

While General Black-shell breaks through in the North.

Brigadier Croaker commands the central force;

Every unit is a crack force of heroes.

A master of strategy is Chief of Staff Turtle;

Lord Tortoise excels in subtle predictions.

Prime Minister Alligator is full of wisdom,

Garrison Commander Terrapin has great ability.

Advancing sideways, crab soldiers wield their swords,

While leaping shrimp amazons draw their bows.

Secretary Catfish looks after the paperwork,

And calls the rolls of the dragon army.

There is a poem about this that goes:

The four ocean dragons were glad to give their help

When Monkey the Sage to seek assistance came.

As the priest Sanzang was in trouble on his journey

They all carried water to put out the flame.

Chapter 41

Monkey was soon back at the Withered Pine Ravine on Mount Hao with his dragon army. "Worthy brothers of the Ao clan," he said, "I have brought you a long way. This is where the demon lives. Will you please stay up here in mid–air and not show your faces while I have it out with him. If I can beat him, I won't need to trouble you gentlemen to capture him for me. If he beats me, there'll be no need for you gentlemen to join in the fray. The only thing I'd like you to do is all to spurt out rain together when I call if he starts his fire." The dragon kings did as they had been told.

Monkey then brought his cloud down to land in the pine wood, saw Pig and Friar Sand, and called to them.

"You were quick," said Pig. "Did you get the dragon king to come?"

"They're all here," Brother Monkey replied. "You'd both better be very careful not to let the baggage get wet if it rains hard. I'm off to fight the demon."

"Off you go, and don't worry," said Friar Sand. "We can cope."

Monkey leapt across the ravine to the cave entrance and shouted, "Open up!" The little devils ran back in to report, "Sun the Novice is here again."

The Red Boy looked up with a smile and said, "The monkey thinks no fire can burn him, because none ever has. That's why he's here again. But this time we won't let him off: we'll burn him to cinders." He sprang up, grasped his spear, and ordered the little demons to wheel the fire carts out. Then he went out in front of the gates and asked Monkey, "Why are you here again?"

"Give me back my master," Monkey replied.

"Keep up with the times, ape," said the demon. "He may be a master to you, but to me he's something to eat with my drinks. You might as well forget about him." These words threw Monkey into a fury. He raised his gold–banded cudgel and struck at the monster's head. The demon quickly parried the blow with his fire–tipped spear. This fight was not like the one before:

A furious evil demon,

An enraged Monkey King.

One set on saving the pilgrim priest,

Whom the other intended to devour.

When the heart changes kinship disappears;

No concessions are made in the absence of feeling.

One would gladly have skinned his foe alive;

The other wanted his enemy pickled in sauce.

Such heroism,

What ferocity!

Chapter 41

Spear parried cudgel in the struggle for mastery;

Cudgel blocked spear in the battle to win.

After twenty rounds of combat

Both sides were on equal terms.

When the demon king had fought twenty rounds with Monkey and could see that neither of them was going to win he feinted, pulled back, clenched his fist, punched himself twice on the nose, and started breathing out fire again. Flames roared from the carts in front of the entrance, and his mouth and eyes were full of the blaze.

Monkey looked back to shout, "Where are you, dragon kings?" The dragon king brothers then led their watery hosts in spurting rain on the demon's fire. It was a splendid rainstorm, Mighty,

Heavy.

Mighty as stars falling from the heavens,

Heavy like waves crashing on the shore.

At first the drops are the size of fists,

Then each is a bowl of water upturned.

Flowing across the land, making duck's necks green;

Washing the mountainside to show it deep blue.

The waters in the ravine are a thousand fathoms of jade,

The spring stream swells to a myriad strands of silver.

Soon the crossroads is flooded,

And the meandering river flows straight.

The dragons help the Tang Priest in his trouble,

Making the Heavenly River overflow.

But heavy though it was, the downpour could not stop the demon's fire. Dragon king's private rain can only put out ordinary fires, not this demon's Samadhi Fire. The rain was like oil poured on the flames: the more there was, the fiercer the blaze. "I'll make a hand–spell and plunge into the fire," said Monkey, who went after Chapter 41

the demon, swinging his cudgel. Seeing Monkey coming, the demon blew a cloud of smoke straight into his face. Turn away though he did, Monkey's eyes smarted terribly, and he could not stop the tears from pouring down. Although not bothered by fire, the Great Sage was vulnerable to smoke. Back at the time when he had made havoc in Heaven and been refined by Lord Lao Zi in the Eight Trigram Furnace he had saved himself from being burnt up by staying in the part of the furnace controlled by the Wind Trigram Xun. But the wind had blown smoke at him, and he had been so thoroughly cooked that his eyes turned fiery and his pupils golden. That was why he was still vulnerable to smoke. When the demon blew another cloud of smoke at him it was more than he could bear, and so he made off on his cloud. The demon king then had the fire–raising equipment put away and went back into the cave.

The flames and the smoke had made the Great Sage unbearably hot, so he plunged straight into the stream to put out the flames, not realizing that the shock of the cold water would make the fire attack his heart, driving his three souls out of him. Alas,

When breathing stopped, cold went his mouth and tongue;

All his souls scattered and his life was done.

In their horror the dragon kings of the four seas who were watching from mid–air stopped making rain and shouted, "Marshal Tian Peng, Curtain–raising General, stop hiding in the woods. Go and find your brother."

Hearing their divine shouts Pig and Friar Sand immediately untied the horse, put the luggage–pole on their shoulders, and rushed out of the wood. They searched for Monkey along the stream, not caring about getting wet and muddy. Upstream they could see someone being carried by the rushing torrent and tossed around in the waves. The moment Friar Sand spotted this he leapt fully clothed into the water and hauled him to the bank. It was the body of the Great Sage. Alas!

He was curled up, unable to stretch any of his limbs and as cold as ice all over. "Poor brother," said Friar Sand. "You who were once going to be immortal are now had your life cut short as a traveler."

"Stop crying, brother," laughed Pig. "The ape's just shamming dead to give us a fright. Feel his chest and see if it's still warm."

"He's cold all over," said Friar Sand, "with only a touch of warmth. How are we going to revive him?"

"He knows how to do seventy – two transformations," said Pig, "and that means seventy – two lives. You grab his feet and I'll manipulate him. So Friar Sand pulled at Monkey's feet while Pig supported his head. They straightened him out, stood him up, then made him sit cross – legged. Pig warmed Monkey up by rubbing vigorously with the palms of his hands, covered his seven orifices, and gave him a dhyana massage. The shock of the cold water had blocked the breath in Monkey's abdomen, leaving him unable to speak. Thanks to Pig's massage and rubbing, the breath in Monkey's body soon flowed through the Three Passes again, circulated in his Bright Hall, and came out through his orifices with a shout of "Master."

"Brother," said Friar Sand, "you live for the master, and his name is on your lips even when you're dying.

Wake up. We're here."

Monkey opened his eyes and asked, "Brothers, are you here? I've lost."

Chapter 41

"You passed out just now," said Pig with a laugh, "and if I hadn't saved you you'd have been done for. You owe me some thanks."

Only then did Monkey get to his feet, look up and say, "Where are you, Ao brothers?"

"We humble dragons are in attendance up here," the dragon kings of the four oceans replied from mid – air.

"I've given you the trouble of this long journey for nothing," said Monkey. "Would you like to go back now?

I'll come to thank you another day." We will say no more about the dragon kings as they led their watery tribes home in majesty.

Friar Sand helped Monkey back into the woods, where they both sat down. Before long Monkey had recovered and was breathing normally as the tears poured down his cheeks. "Master," he cried,

"I remember when you left Great Tang,

And saved me from my torture in the cliff.

Demons have plagued you at each mount and stream;

Your heart was torn by countless pains and woes.

Sometimes you have eaten well and sometimes not;

You've spent your nights in forests or in farms.

Your heart was always set on the Achievement;

Who knows what agonies you suffer now?"

"Don't upset yourself so, brother," said Friar Sand. "We'll work out a plan to get reinforcements and rescue the master."

"Where from?" Monkey asked.

"Long ago, when the Bodhisattva ordered us to protect the Tang Priest, she promised us that if we called on Heaven or earth for help there would always be a response," replied Friar Sand. "Where shall we turn now?"

"I remember that when I made havoc in Heaven," said Monkey, "the Heavenly soldiers were no match for me.

That evil spirit has tremendous magic. Only someone with more powers than I have will be able to subdue him. As the gods of Heaven and earth are useless the only way to catch the monster will be by going to ask the Bodhisattva Guanyin for her help. But I can't ride my somersault cloud: my skin is much too sore and my body is aching. How are we going to get her help?"

"Tell me what to say," said Pig, "and I'll go to ask her."

Chapter 41

"All right," said Monkey with a laugh, "you go. If the Bodhisattva receives you, you mustn't look her in the face. Keep your head down and bow to her respectfully. When she asks you, tell her what this place and the demon are called, then ask her to save the master. If she agrees to come she'll certainly capture the demon."

Pig set off South on his cloud.

Back in the cave the demon was saying with delight, "Sun the Novice is beaten, my little ones. I may not have killed him this time, but at any rate he passed out for a long time." He sighed, then added, "The only thing is that he might send for reinforcements. Open up, and I'll go out to see who he's sending for."

The demons opened the gates for the evil spirit to spring out and look around from mid－air. Seeing Pig heading South the spirit reckoned that he must definitely be going to ask the Bodhisattva Guanyin to come as there was nowhere else to the South where he might be going. The demon brought his cloud down quickly and said to his followers, "Little ones, fetch my leather bag. The string at the mouth may not be any good now as I haven't used it for ages, so please put a new string in it and leave it outside the inner gates. I'll lure Pig back here and pop him in the bag. Then we can steam him nice and tender as a reward for all of you." The little demons fetched their king's As－You－Will leather bag, replaced the string in it, and put it inside the main gates.

As the demon king had lived there so long he was very familiar with the district, and knew which ways to the Southern Sea were quicker and which were longer. Riding his cloud by the quick route he overtook Pig and turned himself into an imitation Guanyin to sit on a crag and wait for him.

When the idiot suddenly saw Guanyin as he was hurtling along on his cloud he had no way of telling that this was a false one: it was a case of seeing the image and taking it for a Buddha. The idiot stopped his cloud, bowed down, and said, "Bodhisattva, your disciple Zhu Wuneng kowtows to you."

"Why have you come to see me instead of escorting the Tang Priest to fetch the scriptures?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"I was travelling with master," Pig replied, "when an evil spirit called the Red Boy carried my master off to the Fire－cloud Cave by Withered Pine Ravine on Mount Hao. Monkey and us two went to find the demon and fight him. Because he can make fire we couldn't beat him the first time. The second time we asked the dragon kings to help out with rain, but even that couldn't put it out. The flames have hurt Monkey so badly that he can't move, which is why he's sent me to ask for your help, Bodhisattva. I beg you in your mercy to save the master."

"The lord of the Fire－cloud Cave is no killer," said the evil spirit. "You must have offended him."

"I never offended him," said Pig. "It was my brother Monkey who did. The demon turned himself into a little boy hanging at the top of a tree to tempt my master. My master is so kind－hearted that he told me to untie the boy and made Monkey carry him. It was Monkey who smashed him to bits and made him carry the master off in a wind."

"Get up," said the evil spirit, "and come with me to the cave to see its lord. I shall ask him to be kind to you.

You will just have to kowtow as an apology and ask for your master back."

"Bodhisattva," said Pig, "I'll kowtow to him if I can get the master back that way."

"Come with me," said the demon king. Knowing no better, the idiot followed the demon back to the Fire－cloud Cave by the way he had come instead of going on to the Southern Sea. They were back at the entrance in an instant.

Chapter 41

"Do not worry," said the evil spirit as he went in, "he is an old acquaintance of mine. Come in." As soon as the idiot raised his foot to go inside the demons all captured him with a great shout, knocked him over, and pushed him into the bag. Then the cord at the mouth was drawn tight and Pig was hung up from a rafter.

The evil spirit resumed his true form, took his seat in the midst of the

demons, and said, "Pig, what powers do you think you have? How do you have the nerve to promise to protect the Tang Priest on his way to fetch the scriptures, or to ask the Bodhisattva here to subdue me? Take a good look. Can't you see I'm the Sage Boy King? Now I've got you I'm going to hang you up for four or five days, steam you, and give you as a treat to the little devils to nibble with their drinks."

Hearing this, Pig started cursing inside the bag: "Damn you, monster. It's disgraceful behavior. You may have used all your tricks and devices to be able to eat me, but I guarantee I'll give every one of you the head–swelling plague." The idiot kept on cursing and yelling, but we will say no more of him.

Monkey meanwhile had felt a stinking wind rush past him as he sat with Friar Sand. "That's bad," he said with a sneeze. "That's a thoroughly ill wind. I'm afraid Pig's got lost."

"But wouldn't he ask the way if he got lost?" asked Friar Sand.

"He must have run into the demon," said Monkey.

"But wouldn't he have come rushing back here if he'd met a demon?" said Friar Sand.

"Can't be sure," said Monkey. "You sit here and look after the things while I go over the ravine and see what's going on."

"Let me go," said Friar Sand. "Your back is still aching and he might fight you again."

"You'd be useless," said Monkey. "It'll have to be me."

Splendid Monkey gritted his teeth against the pain, took his cudgel in his hand, crossed the ravine, and shouted "Vicious monster!" at the mouth of the cave. The little devil at the gate rushed inside to report that Sun the Novice was yelling at the gates again. The demon king ordered Monkey's capture. With a great battle–cry a crowd of demons armed with swords and spears opened the gates and shouted, "Get him."

Monkey was indeed too exhausted to fight them. He squeezed himself against the side of the path, shouted,

"Change," and turned himself into a bundle wrapped in a gold–embroidered cloth. As soon as they saw it the little devils picked it up and took it inside. "Your Majesty," they reported, "Monkey's a

coward. As soon as we shouted 'Get him' he was so scared he dropped his bundle and ran."

"There won't be anything in there that's worth anything," smirked the demon king. "Probably just some worn–out monks' habits and old hats. Get them in, and wash and tear them up to use as rags." One of the little demons took the bundle right inside the cave, not realizing it was really Monkey. "Splendid," thought Monkey, "they're carrying the bundle in." The evil spirit dropped it inside the doors without paying any attention to it.

Splendid Monkey could work transformations within transformations and deceits within deceits. Pulling out one of his hairs he blew on it with magic breath and made it look just like the first bundle. He then turned himself into a fly that perched on the pivot of the door. He could hear Pig grumbling away rather indistinctly, like a hog with swine–fever. When Monkey buzzed over to look for him he found Pig hanging up in the leather sack. Monkey landed on the sack, where he could hear Pig cursing and swearing at the demon.

Chapter 41

"How dare you pretend to be the Bodhisattva Guanyin and trick me into coming here! Then you hang me up and say you're going to eat me. One day soon my elder brother

Will use his superlative Great Sage powers

And have all you demons caught in a shake.

He'll open this bag and let me get out

To give you all thousands of thumps with my rake."

Monkey was delighted to hear this. "The idiot may be a bit stuffy in there, but he's not running down his colours. I'll get that demon and have my revenge on him."

Just as Monkey was working out how to rescue Pig he heard the demon king shouting, "Where are the six warriors?" Six of the little devils who were his friends had been given the title of Warrior. Each one had his own name. They were Mist in the Clouds, Clouds in the

Mist, Fire – fast, Windspeedy, Heater and Cooker. The six warriors stepped forward and knelt down. "Do you know where the Old King lives?" the demon asked.

"Yes," the warriors replied.

"Go tonight to invite His Majesty the Old King here. Tell him that I've caught a Tang Priest who I'm going to cook for him, and that this will make him live for another thousand ages." The six monsters slouched around as they went out with their orders. Monkey flew down from the bag with a buzz and followed the six demons as they left the cave.

If you don't know how the Old King was invited there, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 42

The Great Sage Reverently Visits the Southern Sea

Guanyin in Her Mercy Binds the Red Boy

The story tells how the six warriors left the cave and headed Southwest. Monkey thought, "They are going to invite the Old King to eat our master. I'm sure he must be the Bull Demon King. In the old days we got on very well and were the best of friends, but now I've gone straight and he's still an evil monster. Although it's a long time since I last saw him, I remember what he looks like. I think I'll turn myself into a Bull Demon King, try to fool them, and see how it goes." Splendid Monkey gave the six little demons the slip, spread his wings, flew about a dozen miles ahead of them, shook himself, and turned into a Bull Demon King. He pulled out some hairs, shouted, "Change," and turned them into little devils with dogs, falcons, bows and crossbows as if they were a hunting party in the mountain valley. He then waited for the six warriors.

As the six warriors were making their way sloppily along they suddenly noticed that the Bull Demon King was sitting in their midst. Heater and Cooker fell to their knees in a panic and said, "Your Majesty, you're here already."

Mist in the Clouds, Clouds in the Mist, Fire – fast and Wind – speedy were also all common mortals with fleshly eyes, unable to tell the true from the false, and they too fell to their knees, kowtowed and said, "Your Majesty, we've been sent by the Sage Boy King of the Fire – cloud Cave to invite Your Senior Majesty to a meal of Tang Priest meat that will lengthen your life by a thousand ages."

"Get up, children," said Monkey, "and come back to my cave with me while I change."

"There will be no need for all that trouble, Your Majesty," said the little devils, still kowtowing. "You needn't go back. It's a long way, and I'm sure that our king would be angry with us if you did. Please come with us."

"What good children," said Monkey. "Very well then, lead the way. I'm coming with you." The six little devils pulled themselves together and shouted to clear the way for the Great Sage, who was following them.

They were soon back at the cave. Wind – fast and Fire – speedy rushed in to report, "Your Majesty, His Senior Majesty is here."

"You're capable lads to be back so soon," said the demon king with delight. He then ordered all his commanders to parade his forces with their banners and drums to greet the Old King. All the demon in the cave obediently went out on parade. Monkey threw out his chest and acted very haughtily, braced himself, took back all the hairs he had turned into falconers and huntsmen, then strode straight in through the gates and took the central seat facing South as a monarch.

The Red Boy knelt and kowtowed to him, saying, "Your Majesty, your son pays obeisance."

"No need for that," said Monkey. After making four sets of kowtows the demon king stood below his father.

"What have you asked me here for, boy?" Monkey asked.

"Your stupid son," said the demon with a bow, "caught someone yesterday – – a priest from the Great Tang in the East. I've often heard tell that he is someone who has cultivated his conduct for ten lives, and that if you eat a piece of his flesh you'll live as long as an immortal from Penglai or Yingzhou. I did not dare to eat him by myself, which is why I asked Your Majesty to share the Tang Priest's flesh and extend your life by a thousand ages."

At this Monkey looked shocked and asked, "Which Tang Priest, my boy?"

"The one going to fetch scriptures in the Western Heaven," the demon king replied.

"But isn't he the master of Sun the Novice?" Monkey asked.

"Yes," said the demon king.

Monkey waved his hand, shook his head and said, "Don't start trouble with him. Pick a fight with anyone else you like, but not with him. My dear boy, don't you know what sort of person he is? That ape has vast magic powers and can do all sorts of transformations. When he made havoc in Heaven the Jade Emperor sent a hundred thousand Heavenly soldiers to spread out Heaven—and—earth nets, but they could not catch him. How could you have the nerve to eat his master? Send the priest out his moment, and don't start trouble with that monkey. If he heard that you'd eaten his master he wouldn't even need to fight you. He'd just have to poke a hole in the mountainside with that gold—banded cudgel of his to bring the whole mountain tumbling down.

Then where would you be able to live, my boy, and who would there be to support me in my old age?"

"What things to say, Your Majesty," said the demon king. "You're bolstering him and making me look small.

That Monkey and a couple of his fellow disciples were crossing my mountains when I did a transformation and carried his master off. He and Pig traced me to the gates here and talked some nonsense about kinship. I got into such a raging fury that we fought a few rounds. That was all there was to it. He wasn't anything very special. Then Pig came charging in so I breathed out my True Samadhi Fire and routed him. Monkey was so desperate that he went to ask the dragon kings of the four seas for rain, but they couldn't put out my True Samadhi Fire. I burnt him so badly that he passed out, then sent Pig off in a great hurry to ask the Bodhisattva Guanyin of the Southern Seas to come. I turned myself into a Guanyin and tricked Pig into coming here: he's now hanging up in the As—You—Will bag, and I'm going to steam

him as a treat for all the underlings. That Monkey was back shouting at our gates again this morning. I ordered his arrest, and it threw him into such a panic that he dropped his bundle and fled. It was only then that I invited Your Majesty over to see what the Tang Priest looked like in life before we have him steamed for you to eat and become immortal."

"My dear boy," laughed Monkey, "you're only aware of how you beat him with your True Samadhi Fire. What you forget is that he can do seventy – two transformations."

"No matter what he turns himself into I can always spot him," said the demon king, "and I'm sure he won't dare try another attack here."

"My son," said Monkey, "you may be able to recognize him sometimes, but he won't turn into something big like a wolf, an orangutan or an elephant. If he did he wouldn't be able to get inside the cave. You'd find it hard to recognize him if he turned into something small."

"No matter how small he made himself we have four or five little devils on every door. He'll never be able to get in."

"You don't realize that he can turn himself into a fly, or a mosquito, or a flea, or a bee, or a butterfly, or the tiniest of insects. He could even make himself look just like me. You wouldn't possibly be able to tell."

"Don't worry," said the demon king. "Even if he had guts of iron and a bronze heart he'd never dare come anywhere near here."

"In that case, dear son," said Monkey, "what powers do you have that make you more than a match for him, so that you could invite me here today to eat the flesh of the Tang Priest? All the same, I don't think I'll have any today."

"Why not?" the demon king said.

"I'm getting old," said Monkey, "and your mother keeps nagging at me to do some good works. The only good deed I'm interested in is eating vegetarian food."

"Your Majesty," said the demon king, "is this permanent or just for a month?"

"Neither," said Monkey. "It's called 'thunder vegetarianism'. You do it for four days each month."

"Which four?" the demon asked.

"The three days each month with Xin in their names, and the sixth day too. Today is the day *Xin You,* so that means I ought to be on vegetarian food. Besides, *You* days are not good for having visitors. But tomorrow I could be back to scrub, wash and steam him myself, and enjoy him with you, my boy."

Chapter 42

This all made the demon king think, "My father usually lives on human flesh, and he's already lived to be over a thousand. How come he's now thinking about a vegetarian diet? When you consider all the evil things he's done, three or four days of vegetarian food a month could never make up for them. There's something wrong here. It's very suspicious." He withdrew and went out through the inner gates, sent for the six warriors, and asked them, "Where was His Senior Majesty when you gave him that invitation?"

"Halfway here," the little devils replied.

"I thought you were quick," said the demon king. "Didn't you go to his place?"

"No," said the little devils, "we didn't."

"This is bad," said the demon king. "I've been fooled. It's not His Senior Majesty."

The little devils all knelt before him and asked, "Your Majesty, can't you recognize your own father?"

"He looks and moves just like my father," said the demon king, "but what he says doesn't fit. I'm afraid I've been taken in and beaten by one of his transformations. I want you all to be very careful. The swordsmen among you must draw your swords, the spearmen sharpen your spears, and those of you who can use staves and ropes get ready to do so. I'm going to question him again and watch what he says. If he really is His Senior Majesty then it doesn't matter whether we have the feast today, tomorrow or in a month's time. But if what he says is wrong, then the moment I give a hum you're all to attack at once."

When the little devils had all been given their orders the demon king turned on his heels, went back inside and bowed to Monkey, who said, "No need for all that formality within the family, my boy. Don't bow. Just say whatever it is you have to say."

The demon king prostrated himself before Monkey and replied, "Your foolish son actually invited you for two reasons. One was to present you with Tang Priest meat, and the other was to ask you something. When I was out for a spin on my auspicious light the other day I went right up to the ninth level of clouds and bumped into the Taoist Master Zhang Daoling."

"Do you mean Zhang Daoling the Taoist pope?" Monkey asked.

"Yes," the demon king replied. "What did he say to you?" Monkey asked.

"Seeing that your son is complete in all his organs and that the spacing between my forehead, nose and chin is auspiciously even," the demon king replied, "he asked me the hour, day, month and year of my birth. Your child is too young to remember all that properly. Master Zhang is a brilliant astrologer, and he offered to cast my horoscope. That is what I wanted to inquire about, Your Majesty, so that I can ask him to cast my horoscope next time I meet him."

This made Monkey chuckle to himself: "What a magnificent demon. I've captured quite a few since I became a Buddhist and started escorting the Tang Priest on this journey, but none of them was as sharp as this one.

He's asking me all trivial family details, and I'll just have to fake up my answers. How could I possibly know when he was born?" The splendid Monkey King was extremely crafty.

He continued to sit in majesty in the central position, showing not a trace of fear as he replied with his face wreathed in smiles, "Please get up, dear boy. I'm getting so old now that nothing goes the way I want it to any more. I can't remember just now exactly when you were born. I'll ask your mother when I go home tomorrow."

"But Your Majesty is always reeling off the details of my birth – time," the demon king said, "and telling me I'll live as long as Heaven. You can't have forgotten now. It's outrageous. You're a fake." He then hummed the signal and all the demons rushed on Monkey and stabbed at him with their swords and spears.

The Great Sage parried their thrusts with his cudgel, went back to looking like himself again, and said to the evil spirit, "You're the outrageous one, dear boy. It can't possibly be right for a son to attack his own father."

The demon king was so overwhelmed with shame that he dared not return Monkey's look. Brother Monkey then turned into a golden glow and left the cave.

"Your Majesty, Sun the Novice has gone," the little devils reported.

"Oh well, that's that," said the demon king. "Good riddance. He beat me this time. Shut the gates and say nothing to him. Let's clean, cook and eat the Tang Priest."

Laughing aloud as he brandished his cudgel, Monkey went back across the ravine. Hearing this, Friar Sand hurried out of the woods to say to him, "Brother, you've been ages. Why are you laughing? I hope it's because you've rescued the master."

"No, brother," Monkey replied. "But although I haven't rescued him yet, I won this time."

"How?" Friar Sand asked.

"The fiend disguised himself as Guanyin to lure Pig back here and hang him up in a leather bag. I was just trying to work out how to rescue Pig when the demon sent his six so – called warriors to invite the Old King to a meal of the master's flesh. I reckoned that the Old King was bound to be the Bull Demon King, so I turned myself into his double, went inside, and took the place of honour. He called me 'Your Majesty' and 'father,'

and I replied; and when he kowtowed I sat up straight. It was lovely. I really did win."

"But while you've been scoring easy points the master's life is in terrible danger," said Friar Sand.

"Don't worry about it," said Monkey. "I'm off to ask the Bodhisattva

here."

"But your back's still aching," said Friar Sand.

"Now it isn't," said Monkey. "As the old saying goes, when things go well they raise the spirits. Look after the horse and the luggage. I'm off."

"You've made such an enemy of him," said Friar Sand, "that I'm scared he'll murder the master. Be as quick as you can."

"I'll be quick," said Monkey. "I'll be back in the time it takes to eat a meal."

Even as he was still speaking, the splendid Great Sage left Friar Sand and set off on the somersault cloud that took him straight towards the Southern Ocean. He had been flying for less than an hour when Potaraka Island came into view. He landed his cloud in an instant and went straight to Raka Crag, where the twenty–four devas asked him as he walked solemnly towards them, "Great Sage, where are you going?"

After Monkey had exchanged courtesies with them he replied, "I would like to see the Bodhisattva."

"Please wait for a moment while we report to her," the devas said. Hariti and the other devas went to the entrance of the Tide Cave to report, "Bodhisattva, Sun Wukong has come for an audience." The Bodhisattva Chapter 42

asked for him to be brought in.

The Great Sage tidied his clothes and obediently walked inside at a respectful pace. When he saw the Bodhisattva he prostrated himself before her. "Wukong," she said, "why are you here instead of taking Master Golden Cicada to the West to fetch the scriptures?"

"Bodhisattva," Monkey replied, "your disciple humbly reports that while escorting the Tang Priest on his journey he has reached the Fire–cloud Cave in the Withered Pine Ravine on Mount Hao. An evil spirit called the Red Boy whose title is Sage Boy King has snatched my master. I and Pig found our way to his gates and fought him, but he

started a True Samadhi Fire. This makes it impossible for us to beat him and rescue the master. I hurried to the Eastern Sea and asked the dragon kings of the four seas to make rain, but it couldn't control the flames, and I was badly hurt by the smoke, which all but killed me."

"Why did you send for the dragon kings and not for me," the Bodhisattva asked, "if he has True Samadhi Fire and such great powers?"

"I wanted to come," Monkey replied, "but I'd been so badly affected by the smoke that I couldn't ride a cloud.

I sent Pig to come and ask you for help instead."

"But he has not been here," the Bodhisattva replied.

"That's just it," said Monkey. "Before Pig reached this island the evil spirit turned himself into your double, Bodhisattva, lured him into the cave, and has now hung him up in a leather bag ready to be steamed and eaten."

When the Bodhisattva heard this she said in a furious rage, "How dare that vicious demon turn himself into my double!" With a roar of anger she flung her precious pure vase into the sea. Monkey was so horrified that his hair stood on end. He rose to his feet, stood below the Bodhisattva's throne, and said, "If the Bodhisattva does not control her temper I'll be blamed for talking out of turn and ruining her conduct. This is terrible.

You've thrown your vase away. Had I known you could have done me a big favour and given it to me."

Before the words were all out of his mouth the waves of the sea started to dance and the vase emerged from them. It was being carried on the back of a monster. When Brother Monkey took a good look at the monster he saw what it was like:

Where he comes from he is known as Mud—carrier,

Shining in splendor alone beneath the sea,

Knowing Heaven and earth from his ancient obscurity,

And the ways of ghosts and gods from his peaceful hiding—place.

When concealed he withdraws his head and his tail,

But his legs can make him swim as fast as flying.

On him King Wen drew trigram and Zeng Yuan cast omens;

He always was offered at the court of Fu Xi.

All beauty is revealed by this primal dragon,

Calling up the breakers and making the waves.

Threads of gold sew his carapace together,

And brindling gives the color to the tortoise—shell.

Its back carries the Eight Trigram Ninefold Palace;

Scattered splendor flecks his coat of green.

The dragon king admires him for his courage when alive;

He carries the tablet of Lord Buddha after death.

If you want to know what this creature is called,

He is the wicked tortoise who causes wind and waves.

Carrying the vase on his back, the tortoise crawled ashore, and made twenty—four nods to the Bodhisattva that counted as twenty—four kowtows. Seeing this Monkey laughed to himself as he said, "He must be the vase—keeper. I suppose they ask him for the vase whenever it's lost."

"What is that you are saying, Wukong?"

"Nothing," Monkey replied.

"Fetch the vase," the Bodhisattva ordered. Monkey went over to pick it up, but he had no more chance of moving it than a dragonfly has of shifting a stone pillar by even a fraction of an inch. Monkey went back to the Bodhisattva, knelt before her, and said, "Bodhisattva, your disciple cannot move it."

"All you can do, you ape, is talk," said the Bodhisattva. "If you can't even move a vase how can you hope to subdue demons?"

"To be honest, Bodhisattva, I would normally be able to move it, but today I just can't. I think that being beaten by the evil spirit must have weakened me."

"It is usually an empty vase," said the Bodhisattva, "but when I threw it into the sea it went round the Three Rivers, the Five Lakes, the Eight Seas, the Four Streams, and all the brooks, springs, pools and caves to borrow a whole seaful of water. You are nowhere near strong enough to lift a sea up. That is why you can't move it."

"Indeed," said Brother Monkey, his hands clasped before him, "your disciple didn't know that."

The Bodhisattva then stepped forward, gently lifted the vase with her right hand, and placed it on the palm of her left hand. The tortoise nodded to the Bodhisattva again and slipped back into the sea. "So you keep a Chapter 42

domestic cretin to look after your vase," observed Monkey.

"Wukong," said the Bodhisattva, seating herself, "the sweet dew in this flask of mine, unlike the dragon kings'

private rain, can extinguish Samadhi Fire. I was going to let you take it, but you cannot move it. Then I thought of asking the Naga Maiden to go with you, but you have not got a kind heart and you are an inveterate deceiver. My Naga Maiden is very lovely, and the vase is precious; if you were to steal either of them I would be much too busy to go looking for you. So you will have to leave something as security."

"How sad," said Monkey, "that you should be so suspicious, Bodhisattva. I've never done anything like that since I was converted to the faith. What would you like me to leave as security? You yourself presented me with the brocade tunic I'm wearing. My tiger－skin kilt isn't worth tuppence, and I need this iron cudgel for self－defense. All that's left is the band round my head. It's gold, but you used magic to make it grow into my skull so that is can't be taken off. If you want security I'd like you to take that. Say a band－loosening

spell and take it off. If that won't do, what else is there?"

"You are a cool customer," said the Bodhisattva. "I do not want your clothes, your cudgel or your band. Just pluck out one of the life −saving hairs from the back of your head and give me that as your security."

"But you gave it to me, Your Reverence," protested Monkey. "Besides, If I pulled one out it would break up the set, and they'd not be able to save my life any more."

"Ape," said the Bodhisattva angrily, "you refuse to pull out one little hair. I do not feel at all like parting with my Maiden."

"Bodhisattva," pleaded Monkey, "you are being too suspicious. As they say, 'if you won't do it for the monk's sake do it for the Buddha's sake. Whatever you do, please, please save my master." The Bodhisattva Stepped down with joy from her lotus seat,

Went amid incense to the crag by cloud.

Because the holy monk faced mortal peril

She would deliver him and catch the fiend.

Monkey was absolutely delighted. He invited the Bodhisattva to leave the Tide Cave where the devas were drawn up in line on Pota Cliff. "Let us cross the sea, Wukong," the Bodhisattva said.

"After you, Bodhisattva," said Monkey with a bow. "No, after you," replied the Bodhisattva.

"I would not dare to show off in front of the Bodhisattva," said Monkey, kowtowing. "Were I to ride my somersault cloud, Bodhisattva, I fear I might be somewhat exposed, and you'd accuse me of disrespect." At this the Bodhisattva sent the Naga Maiden to cut a lotus petal from the lotus pool and take it to the water beneath the cliff. "Stand on that petal," the Bodhisattva said to Brother Monkey, "and I will take you across the sea."

"But that petal is much too light and thin to take my weight," said

Monkey. "If I fall into the sea my tigerskin kilt will get soaked, and the saltpeter that keeps it soft will be washed out. Then I won't be able to wear it in cold weather."

"Get on and see," shouted the Bodhisattva. Not daring to make any more excuses, Monkey obediently jumped on it. Although it looked so flimsy it was considerably bigger than a sea－going boat once he was aboard.

"It can carry me, Bodhisattva," he exclaimed with delight.

"Then over the sea with you," replied the Bodhisattva.

"But there's no pole, oars, mast or sail," said Monkey, "so how can I get over?"

"You will not need them," said the Bodhisattva, and with a single breath she blew the boat right across to the opposite shore of the Southern Sea of Suffering.

Once his feet were on dry land Monkey smiled and said, "That Bodhisattva really showed off her magic powers by blowing me right across the sea with no trouble at all."

Instructing all the devas to guard her immortal realm, the Bodhisattva told the Naga Maiden to close the gates of the cave, left the Pota Cliff by auspicious cloud and went over to call, "Where are you, Huian?" Huian was Moksa, the second son of Heavenly King Li, the Pagoda －carrier; he was the disciple whom the Bodhisattva personally taught, and he never left her side. His full title was Huian the Novice, Protector of the Dharma.

Huian placed his hands together and stood awaiting the Bodhisattva's orders. "Go straight up to Heaven," she said, "call on His Majesty your father, and ask him to lend me his Pole Star swords."

"How many will you need, Mistress?" Huian asked.

"The whole set," she replied.

Huian then went obediently straight up on his cloud, in through the Southern Gate of Heaven, and into the Cloud－tower Palace, where he kowtowed to his father.

"Where have you come from?" Heavenly King Li asked after greeting him.

"My mistress has been asked by Sun Wukong to subdue a demon," Huian – –or Moksa – –replied. "She has sent me to visit you and ask for the loan of your set of Pole Star swords."

The Heavenly King then sent Nezha to fetch the thirty–six swords, which he gave to Moksa. "Brother," said Moksa to Nezha, "would you please pay my respects to our mother. I'm on a very urgent job, and I'll come to kowtow to her when I bring the swords back." Taking his leave in a great hurry he brought his auspicious light straight down to the Southern Sea, where he presented the swords to the Bodhisattva.

The Bodhisattva took the swords, threw them into the air, said a spell, and turned them into a thousand–petal lotus throne, on which she took her seat. Monkey grinned to himself and said, "That Bodhisattva is a real skinflint. She has a lotus throne of many colours in her lotus pool already, but she's too mean to sit on that.

She would have to send him off to borrow someone else's instead."

"Wukong," said the Bodhisattva, "be quiet and come with me." They then both left the coast by cloud. The white parrot flew ahead, while the Great Sage and Huian stood behind her.

Chapter 42

Within moments they saw a mountain–top. "That's Mount Hao," said Monkey. "It's about a hundred and fifty miles from here to the demon's place." The Bodhisattva then ordered him to lower the auspicious cloud. She said the magic word *"Om"* above the summit, whereupon many a god and ghost – –all the local spirits of the mountain – –emerged from all around the mountain and gathered to kowtow to the Bodhisattva's lotus throne.

"Do not be afraid," she said. "I am here to capture this demon king. I want this whole area swept completely clean, with not a living creature left behind within a hundred miles of here. All the baby animals in their dens and fledglings in holes in the trees must be put on the top of this high crag for safety." Obediently the demons withdrew, and soon they were all back. "Now that the place is clean, you may all return to your shrines," said the Bodhisattva. She then turned her vase of purity upside–down, letting the water roar out with a noise like thunder. Indeed, it

Flowed down from the peak,

Smashed through the rocks.

Flowed down from the peak with the force of the sea,

Smashed through the rocks like a mighty ocean.

Black spray rose to the watery heavens,

Great waves coldly reflected the sun.

Jade waves smashed through crags,

While the sea was covered with golden lotuses.

Guanyin displayed her demon – quelling magic,

Producing a fixing dhyana from her sleeve.

She made the mountain a Potaraka Island,

Just like the one in the Southern Sea

Tall grew the rushes, and the epiphyllum tender,

Flowers were everywhere, and the pattra looked fresh.

Parrots perched in the purple bamboos,

And quails were calling amid the verdant pines.

Endless lines of waves as far as the eye could see,

And all that could be heard was the wind on the waters.

Chapter 42

The Great Sage Monkey was full of silent admiration: "What great mercy and compassion. If I had that magic power I'd just have tipped the vase over, and to hell with the birds, beasts, reptiles and insects."

"Stretch your hand out, Wukong," said the Bodhisattva. Monkey at once neatened his clothes and put out his left hand. The Bodhisattva

drew out her sprig of willow, moistened it in the sweet dew, and wrote

"Confusion" on his palm. "Make a fist," she old him, "and go to challenge the demon to battle. Let him beat you, then draw him back here. I have a Dharma power with which to subdue him."

Monkey obediently took his cloud straight back to the cave entrance. Brandishing his cudgel with one hand and clenching the other into a fist, he shouted, "Open up, evil spirits." The little devils scampered back inside to report, "Sun the Novice is here again."

"Shut the doors tight and ignore him," said the demon king.

"What a fine son you are," shouted Monkey, "driving your own father out of doors and refusing to open the doors to him."

"Sun the Novice is being very abusive," the little devils came back in to report.

"Ignore him," said the demon king. When the doors were still shut after he had called twice, Monkey grew very angry. He raised his iron cudgel and smashed a hole in them.

This threw the little devils into such a panic that they ran tumbling and stumbling in to say, "Sun the Novice has broken the doors down."

Hearing that the outer doors had been broken down after all the earlier reports the demon king now leapt up and sprang outside brandishing his spear and flinging insults back at Monkey: "You ape, you have no sense at all. I let you off lightly, but you don't know when enough is enough. You're trying to bully me again. I'll make you pay for the crime of smashing down my doors."

"What about your crime in driving your own father away?" retorted Monkey.

In his humiliation and anger the demon king thrust his spear at Brother Monkey's chest. Monkey parried this with his cudgel and hit back. Once they started they fought four or five rounds in which Monkey, one hand holding the cudgel and the other clenched in a fist, gave ground. "I'm going back to get the Tang Priest scrubbed and cleaned," said the demon.

"You be careful, my boy," said Monkey. "Heaven can see what you're doing. You come here." This stung the demon king into an even

greater fury. Running after Monkey he caught him up and took another thrust at him with his spear. Monkey swung back with his cudgel, and after a few more rounds ran away in defeat again.

The demon king started to taunt him once more: "Last time you were good for twenty or thirty rounds. But now you're running away each time we fight. What's wrong with you?"

"My dear boy," grinned Monkey, "your father's afraid you'll start that fire again."

"I won't," said the demon, "now, come here."

"If you're not going to start a fire," said Monkey, "let's move away from here. A tough guy doesn't attack people in front of his own door." Not realizing that this was a trick, the evil spirit raised his spear and ran after him. Monkey trailed his cudgel and opened his other hand. The demon king then fell into confusion and chased Monkey for all he was worth. The quarry moved like a shooting star, and the pursuer like a bolt that Chapter 42

had just been shot from a crossbow.

Before long Monkey saw the Bodhisattva. "Evil spirit," he said to the demon, "I'm scared of you. Please spare me. I'm going to where the Bodhisattva Guanyin of the Southern Sea lives. You go home now." The demon king was not going to believe this, so he gritted his teeth and continued the pursuit. With a shake of his body Monkey hid himself in the Bodhisattva's divine radiance.

Seeing that Monkey had disappeared, the evil spirit went up to the Bodhisattva, glared at her, and asked, "Are you reinforcements sent for by Monkey?" The Bodhisattva did not answer.

The demon king then twirled his spear and roared, "Hey! Are you reinforcements sent for by Monkey?" The Bodhisattva again did not answer.

The demon king then thrust his spear straight at the Bodhisattva's heart, at which she turned into a beam of golden light and rose straight up to the highest heavens. Monkey went up with her and complained,

"Bodhisattva, you've tricked me again. Why did you act deaf and dumb and say nothing when that demon kept asking you? One thrust from his spear and you ran away. You've even ditched your lotus throne."

"Keep quiet," the Bodhisattva said, "and see what he does next."

Monkey and Moksa stood next to each other up there watching while the demon said with a derisive jeer,

"Insolent ape, you didn't know who you were up against. You didn't realize what sort of person I am. You fought me and lost several times, and then you sent for that putrid Bodhisattva. One thrust from my spear and she's disappeared. She's even left her lotus throne behind. Well, I'm going to sit on it now." The evil spirit then sat cross-legged in the middle of the throne, imitating the Bodhisattva.

"That's just marvellous," said Monkey. "Now you've given your lotus throne away."

"What are you saying now, Wukong?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"What am I saying?" Monkey replied. "I'm saying you've given your lotus throne away. That fiend has just sat himself down on it. Would you care to get it back?"

"But I want him to sit on it," the Bodhisattva said. "He's so small he'll sit on it much more safely than you did," Monkey replied.

"Stop talking," said the Bodhisattva, "and watch the power of the Dharma."

She pointed downwards with her sprig of willow and called. "Turn back." The colours and auspicious glow of the lotus sea all disappeared, leaving the demon king sitting on the points of swords. "Drive the swords in by hitting their handles with the demon-quelling pestle," she ordered Moksa.

Moksa then took his cloud straight down and struck over a thousand times with the demon-quelling pestle as if he were ramming down earth to build a wall. The demon was now pouring with blood from his open wounds as the points of two swords both came out through his thighs. Watch the demon as he grits his teeth against the agony. Throwing his spear down he pulled furiously at the swords.

"Bodhisattva," exclaimed Monkey, "that monster's not afraid of pain.

He's trying to pull the swords out."

Seeing this she called to Moksa, "Don't kill him." She then pointed her sprig of willow down once more, said the magic word *"Om,"* and turned all Pole Star swords into halberds with inverted barbs like wolf's teeth that Chapter 42

could not be pulled out. This finally made the demon desperate.

Trying to bend the sword – points he pleaded in his agony, "Bodhisattva, your disciple was blind. I failed to recognize your great Dharma powers. I beg you in your mercy to spare my life. I shall never do evil again, and I vow to become a Buddhist and observe the rules of conduct."

On hearing this the Bodhisattva went down on her golden light with Moksa, Monkey and the white parrot till she was in front of the evil spirit. "Will you really accept my rules of conduct?"

The demon king nodded and said amid tears, "I will accept the rules if you spare my life."

"Will you join my faith?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"If you spare my life I swear I will," said the demon king.

"In that case," said the Bodhisattva, "I shall lay my hands on your head and administer the vows." From her sleeve she produced a golden razor, with a few strokes of which she shaved the demon's head into a Mount Tai tonsure, leaving him with a topknot and with three little tufts.

"Poor evil spirit," laughed Monkey. "Now you can't tell whether he's a boy or a girl. Goodness knows what he's meant to be."

"As you have accepted my rules of conduct," said the Bodhisattva to the demon, "I will not mistreat you. I shall call you Page Sudhana. Do you accept?" The demon bowed in assent, wanting only to have his life spared. The Bodhisattva then pointed at him and called, "Withdraw!" With a crashing sound the Pole Star swords all fell into the dust. The boy was now unharmed.

"Huian," said the Bodhisattva, "will you take the swords back to the Heavenly Palace and return them to His Majesty your father? You need not come back to meet me: wait with all the devas on the Pota Crag." As instructed, Moksa took the swords back to Heaven then returned to the Southern Sea.

Now the boy's savage nature had not yet been tamed. When he realized that the pain in his legs had gone, that his backside was no longer wounded, and that he had three little tufts of hair on his head he ran over to grab his spear and said to the Bodhisattva, "You don't have any real Dharma powers that can put me down. It was all just an illusion. I refuse to accept your rules. Take this!"

He jabbed at her face with his spear, making Monkey so angry that he struck at the boy with his cudgel.

"Don't hit him," the Bodhisattva called out.

"I have a way of punishing him." From her sleeve she produced a gold band and continued, "This treasure is one of the three bands— —a golden one, tightening one, and a prohibition one— —that the Tathagata Buddha gave me when I went to the East to find the pilgrim who would fetch the scriptures. You are wearing the tightening band. The prohibition band was used to subdue the great god guarding the mountain. I have not been able to bring myself to give the golden one away before, but as this demon is being so outrageous he shall have it."

The splendid Bodhisattva then waved the band in the wind, shouted "Change!" and turned it into five band that she threw at the boy with the command "Fix!" One went over his head, two on his hands, and two on his feet. "Stand clear, Wukong," the Bodhisattva ordered, "while I say the Gold—band Spell."

"Bodhisattva," pleaded Monkey in panic, "I asked you here to subdue the demon, so why ever are you putting a curse on me?"

"But this will not be the Band—tightening Spell that affects you," the Bodhisattva explained. "It will be the Gold—band Spell that works on the boy." Monkey felt easier in his mind as he stood beside the

Bodhisattva and listened to her saying the spell. She made magic with her hands and recited the words silently several times over. The evil spirit twisted and tugged at his ears and cheeks, stamped his feet and rolled around.

Indeed,

One phrase unites all the words without number;

Boundless and deep is the strength of the Dharma.

If you don't know how the boy was finally converted, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 43

At the Black River a Monster Carries Off the Priest

The Dragon Prince of the West Captures an Alligator

The story tell how the Bodhisattva recited the spell several times before stopping. Only then did the evil spirit's agony cease. When he recovered, stood up and looked at himself he found that he had gold bands rounds his neck, hands and feet. They were painfully tight, and try as he would he could not move them at all.

The treasures had already taken root in his flesh, and the more he rubbed them the more they hurt.

"There, there, little darling," mocked Monkey. "The Bodhisattva's put a lucky amulet ring round your neck to make sure you grow up safely."

This jibe infuriated the boy, who grabbed his spear once more and started lunging wildly at Monkey. Monkey nimbly avoided it and went behind the Bodhisattva, yelling, "Say the spell, say the spell."

The Bodhisattva moistened her willow sprig with sweet dew, and flicked the ambrosial liquid at him with a call of "Together!" The boy dropped his spear and put his hands together in front of his chest, unable to pull them apart. The "Guanyin twist" that some people still have today is what he had. Only when he could not pick up his spear because his hands were inseparably joined did the boy appreciate the deep mystery of the power of the Dharma. He could do no other than lower his head in a kowtow.

The Bodhisattva then recited another true spell and turned her vase

over to take back the whole seaful of water. Not half a drop was left behind. "Wukong," she said to Monkey, "this demon has now surrendered. The only thing is that he still has some wild ideas. He will – only accept the Dharma after he has gone from here to Potaraka Island making a kowtow at every step of the journey. You must go straight back to the cave to rescue your master."

"As your disciple has put you to the trouble of this long journey," said Monkey with a kowtow, "I should see you some of your way back."

"No need," said the Bodhisattva. "I am worried for your master's life." Brother Monkey then kowtowed to take his leave of her joyfully. The evil spirit was now converted to the True Achievement by Guanyin, who Chapter 43

became his fifty – third religious teacher.

The story now turns from how the Bodhisattva won a page boy through her wisdom to Friar Sand, who had long been sitting in the woods waiting for Monkey. When Monkey did not come back he tied the luggage on the back of the horse, and leading it by its bridle with one hand and holding his demon – quelling staff in the other he went out of the pine woods to take a look to the South. Seeing Monkey returning in a very good mood, Friar Sand went up to him and said, "Brother, why has it taken you so long to get back from asking the Bodhisattva to come? I've been half dead from worry."

"You must have been asleep and dreaming," said Monkey. "I've already brought her here and she has subdued the demon." Monkey then told him all about the Bodhisattva's Dharma power. "Let's go and rescue the master," said Friar Sand with delight.

The two of them then leapt across the ravine and rushed to the doors, where they tethered the horse. Then they charged in together, their weapons at the ready, and wiped out the devils. They let the leather bag down to release Pig, who thanked Monkey and asked, "Where's that evil spirit, brother? Just let me have a go at him with my rake; I want to get my own back."

"Let's find the master," said Monkey.

The three of them went right to the back of the cave, where they

found their master tied up stark naked and weeping in the rear courtyard. Friar Sand untied him while Monkey fetched his clothes to dress him. The three of them then knelt before him and said, "Master, you have suffered terribly."

Sanzang thanked them and said, "Dear disciples, I have put you to great trouble. How was the demon subdued?" Monkey then told him how the Bodhisattva had been asked to come and had taken the boy as her page. (This is what people refer to nowadays when they talk about the page boy submitting to the Bodhisattva, and respecting her as his fifty–third teacher after visiting the Buddha on three occasions.) Monkey told Friar Sand to collect all the valuables in the cave then find some rice to prepare a vegetarian meal for the master. The venerable elder owed his life entirely to the Great Sage Sun; and it was on the Handsome Monkey Spirit that he depended to fetch the scriptures. Master and disciples then left the cave. The horse was saddled up, and once they found the main trail they headed West with wholehearted determination.

One day when they had been travelling for over a month Sanzang heard the sound of a river. "Disciple," said Sanzang in great alarm, "what river is that?"

"You're much too much of a worrier, old Master," laughed Monkey "ever to become a priest. Why should you alone among the four of us hear water? Have you forgotten your *Heart Sutra?"*

"I was taught the fifty–four sentences and 270 words of that sutra on Pagoda Mountain by the Rook's Nest Hermit in person," replied Sanzang. "I learned them by ear and I constantly repeat them to myself. Which sentence of it have I forgotten?"

"Master," said Brother Monkey, "you've forgotten the sentence, 'There is no sight, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch and no mental process.' We men of religion should not look on beauty, hear music, smell sweet fragrances, or taste good flavors. We should not even notice whether we are hot or cold, and our minds should be free from delusion. This is the way to repel the Six Bandits that attack eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Because of your mission to fetch the scriptures you are constantly worrying. You are afraid of evil monsters because you cling to your body. When you ask for vegetarian food your tongue is moved. If you enjoy a pleasant aroma it stimulates your nose. Sounds startle your ears. By looking at things you fasten your

eyes on them. If you will keep on inviting the Six Bandits in over and over again how can you ever expect to reach the Western Heaven and see the Buddha?"

At this Sanzang fell into deep and silent thought for a while, then said, "Disciple, When many years ago from my emperor I was parted,

On endless days and nights of travelling I started.

In the mists upon the mountains my grass sandal were worn through; Many ridges have I climbed in my rain – hat of bamboo.

How often have I sighed when the gibbons call at night?

I cannot bear to listen to birds chirping in the moonlight.

When will I achieve the three Samadhis, I implore,

And obtain the Tathagata's most wonderful Law?"

When he had heard this Monkey could not help clapping his hands and laughing aloud. "Master," he said,

"you're suffering terribly from homesickness. If you really want to achieve the three Samadhis it isn't all difficult. As the saying goes, 'At the right time the achievement completes itself.'"

"Brother," said Pig, looking back to him, "if we keep on coming up against such terrible demons we'll never succeed in a thousand years."

"Brother Pig," said Friar Sand, "you're as coarse – tongued as I am. Stop irritating Monkey: he might lose his temper. Just keep on carrying your load and one day we'll finally succeed."

They walked on as they talked, and the horse's hoofs never rested until they came to a great black river stretching as far as the eye could see. When the four of them stood on the bank to take a close look they saw Wave upon turbid wave,

Eddies and muddy whirls.

Wave upon turbid wave churns up the dark waters,

Eddies and muddy whirls looking like grease.

From close up it does not reflect the human image;

For far around not a tree can be seen.

Chapter 43

596

Journey to the West

Rolling ink,

Seething ash.

Bubbles that rise are charcoal;

The flying foam is like shoveled coal – dust.

Cattle and sheep will not drink,

Magpie and crow avoid it.

Cattle and sheep will not drink its blackness;

Magpie and crow avoid its vast expanse.

Only the reeds by the bank grow as they should,

While the flowers and grass by the sandbank flourish green.

The world is full of rivers and lakes,

And many are its streams and marshes and springs,

But of all the places that people have seen in life,

The Black River of the West is not among them.

"Disciples," asked Sanzang as he dismounted, "why is this river so dark and turbid?"

"Someone's washed out an indigo dyeing – vat in it," said Pig. "No," said Friar Sand, "somebody's been cleaning their inkstone in it."

"Stop making silly guesses, you two," said Monkey, "and let's work out how we're going to get the master across."

"I'd have no problem crossing that river," said Pig. "I could ride a cloud or swim and be over it before you'd had time to eat a meal."

"And I could be across in an instant on a cloud or by walking on the water," said Friar Sand. "It's easy enough for us," said Monkey, "but the problem is the master."

"Disciples," said Sanzang, "how wide is this river?"

"Three or four miles," said Pig.

"You three decide which of you will carry me across," said Sanzang.

"Pig can carry you," said Monkey.

"It'd be hard," said Pig. "If I tried carrying him by cloud we wouldn't get three feet above the ground. As the saying goes, mortals are heavier than mountains. And if I tried to swim with him on my back we'd both drown."

As they were talking on the bank a man appeared upstream rowing a little boat. "Disciples," said Sanzang with delight, "here's a boat. Let's ask the boatman to take us across."

"Boatman," shouted Friar Sand, "ferry us over."

"This isn't a ferry," replied the man on the boat, "and I couldn't possibly ferry you over." "'Helpfulness first, in Heaven and earth,'" said Friar Sand. "You may not be a ferryman, but we don't keep coming to pester you. We are Buddhists from the East sent by the emperor to fetch the scriptures. If you could have a little consideration and ferry us over we'd show you our gratitude."

At this the boatman brought his craft over to the bank and said as he rested on his oars, "Masters, this boat's too small to take all of you over." When Sanzang took a closer look he saw that the boat was carved from a single log with only enough room for two hollowed out in the middle.

"What shall we do?" Sanzang asked. "This boat can take us over in two trips," said Friar Sand. At this Pig tried what he thought would be a

clever way of saving himself some trouble and getting himself well in with the master. "Friar Sand," he said, "you and Brother Monkey look after the luggage and the horse while I take the master over first. Then the man can come back for the horse. Brother Monkey can jump over the river."

"Good idea," nodded Monkey.

While the idiot supported the Tang Priest, the boatman pushed off and rowed straight into the main stream.

Once they reached the middle there was a great roar as huge waves blotted out the heavens, and a terrible storm blew up. What a wind!

The skies were filled with angry clouds;

Towering black waves were whipped up in the river.

The flying sand from the river's banks was blotting out the sun; All around the trees went down with cries that rose to heaven.

The churned – up rivers and seas struck terror into dragons,

While trees and flowers perished in the dust.

The blows were like the crash of thunder;

The mighty gusts all roared like hungry tigers.

Crabs, fish and prawns lay down to pray to heaven,

While birds and beasts were driven from their nests.

Chapter 43

Disaster struck all boatmen on the lakes;

No human life was safe upon the seas.

The fisherman by the stream could barely hold his spear;

The river boatman could not punt his ferry.

Houses collapsed as bricks and tiles flew;

In the universal terror Mount Tai was shaken.

This wind was the work of the boatman, who was in fact a monster from the Black River. Watch as the Tang Priest and Pig plunge into the waters, boat and all. They disappeared without a trace, and nobody knew where they had been carried off to.

On the river bank Friar Sand and Monkey were desperate. "What are we to do?" they said. "The master keeps running into disaster. Now he's in trouble here at the Black River after escaping from the last demon and having a peaceful stretch of his journey."

"Perhaps the boat capsized," said Friar Sand, "let's look for him further downstream."

"No," said Monkey, "it can't be that. If the boat had capsized Pig can swim and he'd certainly have saved the master and raised him above the water. I noticed there was something a bit wrong about the boatman just now, and I'm sure that he caused the wind and has taken the master down under the water."

"Why didn't you say so before?" asked Friar Sand. "Look after the horse and the luggage while I go to look for him in the water."

"But the water doesn't look right either," said Monkey. "I don't think you'll be able to."

"It's nothing compared to the water in my Shifting Sands River," said Friar Sand, "I can do it."

The splendid monk took off his tunic, tied strips of cloth round his wrists and feet, and plunged into the waves with a great splash as he whirled his demon–quelling staff. As he strode through the waters he heard voices, so he drew aside to steal a look. He saw a pavilion, over the doors of which was written large PALACE OF

THE GOD OF THE BLACK RIVER IN THE HENGYANG VALLEY.

He could hear a monster saying to himself as he sat there, "It's been hard work getting him, but this priest is a holy man who has cultivated his conduct for ten lives. One piece of his flesh is enough to make you immortal.

I've waited for him long enough, and now my ambition has been fulfilled."

Then he issued his orders: "Little ones, fetch the metal steamer at once, cook those two monks whole, then write an invitation and deliver it to my second uncle asking him over to eat them as a birthday feast."

This was too much for Friar Sand's temper. He beat on the doors with his staff, yelling abusively, "Damned monsters, give me back my master the Tang Priest and my brother Pig this minute!" This gave the demons inside the doors such a fright that they ran in to report, "Disaster!"

Chapter 43

"What disaster?" the old monster asked.

"There's a very sinister – looking monk outside beating at the outer doors and yelling for them."

At this the monster sent for his armor, which the little demons brought in. When it was all properly tied on he went outside, holding his flail of steel pieces joined together by bamboo – shaped links. He was a vicious sight.

Round eyes gleamed fiery red in a square – cut face;

His blood – red lips were curled round an enormous mouth.

The whiskers of his beard were strands of wire;

The matted hair at his temples was cinnabar red.

He looked like the sinister Year Lord in his might,

With the angry face of furious thunder god.

The iron armor he wore was burnished with flowers,

And many a jewel was set in his golden helm.

Holding the flail of bamboo – shaped steel in his hand,

He stirred up a gale around him as he walked.

At birth he had been a creature of the waters,

But he left his native stream and turned to evil.

If you would like to know the true name of this spirit,

He used to be called the Little Alligator.

"Who's that beating at my doors?" the demon roared.

"I'll get you, you ignorant damned devil," said Friar Sand. "Deceitful monster, disguising a yourself as a boatman and rowing over to snatch my master. Give him back at once and I'll spare your life." The demon roared with laughter at this.

"Monk, you're throwing your life away," said the monster. "Your master's mine now, and I'm going to steam him for a feast. Come here and see if you can beat me. If you can hold out for three rounds I'll give you your master back; but if you can't I'll cook you with him and you can forget all about going to the Western Heaven."

Chapter 43

Friar Sand was now in a towering rage, and he swung at the monster's head with his staff, which the monster parried with his flail. The pair of them had a fine underwater battle: The demon—quelling staff and the bamboo—link flail;

Two angry contenders fighting for mastery.

The millennial monster of the Black River,

And a former immortal from the Hall of Miraculous Mist.

One was greedy for Sanzang's flesh,

The other longed to save the Tang Priest's life.

As they fought beneath the waters

There was no way they both could succeed.

Frightened shrimps and fishes shook their heads and hid;

Crabs and turtles withdrew into their shells.

Then with a roll of drums the water palace demons

Joined in the fight and yelled before the gates.

The splendid monk, the true Friar Sand,

Stood all alone and let them see his might.

As they plunged through the waves no victor emerged;

Flail and staff were evenly matched.

All this was because the Tang Priest wanted

To visit the Buddha and fetch the scriptures.

When they had fought thirty rounds without result Friar Sand thought, "This monster is as good a fighter as I am. I'm not going to be able to beat him. I'll have to lure him out for Monkey to kill." Friar Sand then pretended to drop his guard and took to his heels trailing his staff behind him.

But instead of chasing him the evil monster said, "Off you go then. I won't fight you any more. I'm going to write invitations for my guests."

Chapter 43

Friar Sand emerged from the waves snorting with fury. "Brother," he said when he saw Monkey, "that monster's outrageous."

"You were down a long time," said Monkey. "Is there an evil spirit? Did you find the master?"

"There's a pavilion down there," said Friar Sand, "with 'Palace of the God of the Black River in the Hengyang Valley' written over it. I hid there and listened to him talking. He told his underlings to wash the metal steamer ready to cook the master and Brother Pig and sent them to invite his uncle for a birthday feast. It made me so angry that I started beating at his doors. The monster came out with his flail of pieces of bamboo—shaped steel and fought me for ages. We must

have gone thirty rounds without either of us coming out on top. I pretended to be beaten to lure him out here so that you could help me, but he was too clever to come after me. He went back in to write invitations, so I came out."

"What sort of evil being is he?" Monkey asked.

"He looks a bit like a big soft–shelled turtle," said Friar Sand. "If he's not one of those he's an alligator."

"I wonder who his uncle is," said Monkey.

Before the words were out of his mouth an old man emerged from a bend in the river, knelt at a great distance from them, and said, "The God of the Black River kowtows to the Great Sage."

"Weren't you the evil spirit who rowed the boat?" said Monkey. "Trying to fool us again, are you?"

The old man wept and kowtowed as he replied, "I'm no monster, Great Sage. I'm the real god of this river. The evil spirit came here from the Western Ocean on a flood tide during the fifth month last year. He fought me, and as I'm so old I was no match for him, so he seized my Palace of the God of the Black River in the Hengyang Valley, and killed many of my watery tribe. I had to go to the sea to bring a case against him. But the Dragon King of the Western Sea is his uncle, so of course he threw my case out and told me to turn my palace over to the monster. I tried submitting a protest to Heaven, but I was too humble a river god to obtain an audience with the Jade Emperor. Now that you are here, Great Sage, I've come to pay my respects and submit to you. I beg you to avenge me."

"From what you say the Dragon King of the Western Sea is in the wrong too," said Brother Monkey. "Now that the monster has captured my master and my fellow–disciple, announced that he's going to steam them and invited his uncle, I've got to capture him. It's a good thing you came to tell me. Very well then, river god, you keep an eye on things with Friar Sand here while I go to the sea to arrest that dragon and make him capture the monster."

"I'm very grateful, Great Sage," said the river god.

Monkey went by somersault cloud straight to the Western Ocean, where he landed, made water–repelling magic with his hands, and parted the waves. He saw a black fish spirit who was carrying a golden invitation box shoot upstream like an arrow. Monkey met him

head – on and smashed his skull open with a single blow of his iron cudgel, sending the poor spirit's brains flying and splitting his cheeks apart, and with a loud noise it emerged from the water. Monkey opened the box and found in it an invitation that read: Your Excellency Second Uncle Ao,

Your nephew Tuo Jie bows in greeting and is deeply grateful for your kind regards. Today I have captured two priests from the East who are great rarities. Not daring to consume them myself, and remembering that your birthday is imminent, I have arranged a simple banquet to wish you eternal life. I beg that you honour me with your illustrious presence.

"That fellow has given me all the evidence I need for my case," chuckled Monkey, tucking the invitation in his sleeve and carrying on his way. By then a yaksha patrolling the sea had noticed Monkey and rushed straight back to the crystal palace to report to the dragon king, "Lord Monkey, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, is here."

The dragon king Ao Shun led his watery tribe from the palace to welcome Monkey: "Great Sage, won't you come into my humble palace for a while and take a cup of tea?"

"I've never had a single cup of your tea," said Monkey, "but you've drunk my wine before now."

To this the dragon king replied with a smile, "Great Sage, you have always been a faithful follower of the Buddha and have never touched meat or alcohol. You've never invited me to drinks."

"You may never have been over for drinks, but you're already in trouble for being a boozer," said Monkey.

"How am I in trouble?" asked Ao Shun with horror. Monkey produced the invitation and handed it to the dragon king.

At the sight of this the dragon king was scared out of his wits. He fell to his knees in panic, kowtowed and said, "Forgive me, Great Sage. That awful boy is my younger sister's ninth son. My brother – in – law, her husband, sent the wrong amount of wind and cut down on the

rain. A heavenly edict was sent to the human prime minister Wei Zheng, who beheaded him in a dream. I brought my sister here because she had nowhere else to live and bring the boy up. Two years ago a disease killed her, and as the boy was then homeless I sent him to nourish his nature and cultivate the truth in the Black River. I never imagined he'd commit such terrible sins, and now I'll send people to arrest him."

"How many fine sons did your sister have?" asked Monkey. "Are they all monsters?"

"Nine," the dragon king replied. "The other eight have turned out well. The eldest is the Little Yellow Dragon, and he lives in the Huai River. The second is the Little Black Dragon who lives in the River Ji. The third is the Blue－backed Dragon who occupies the Yangtse. The Red －whiskered Dragon is the fourth son, and he holds the Yellow River. The fifth is the Vain－effort Dragon who looks after the bell for the Lord Buddha. Guardian Dragon is the sixth, and he sits guarding the roof of the Heavenly Palace. Respectful Dragon is the seventh; he holds up the winged column at the Jade Emperor's court. The eighth is Clam Dragon who lives with my eldest brother on Mount Tai. The youngest, Alligator Dragon, has had no particular duties since he is still young. He was only sent to the Black River to nourish his nature last year. He hasn't yet won himself any fame or been transferred and given a job elsewhere. I never expected that he would disobey me by offending you, Great Sage."

When Monkey heard this he laughed and said, "How many husbands has your sister had?"

"Only one," Ao Shun replied, "the Dragon King of the Jing River. After his execution she lived here as a widow until she died of an illness the year before last."

"How could one husband and one wife have had so many little bastards?" Monkey asked.

"It's as the saying goes, there are nine kinds of dragons born, and each one is different," Ao Shun replied.

"I lost my patience just now," said Monkey. "With this invitation as evidence I was going to submit a complaint to the Heavenly Court and charge you with conspiring with a monster to kidnap. But from what you tell me the wretch refused to follow your advice, so I'll let you off this time, partly out of respect for your elder brother and partly because that wretch is too young to know any better. Besides, you didn't know what was happening. But you must send someone at once to arrest him and rescue my master. Then we'll decide what to do."

Ao Shun then told his son Mo'ang, "Take five hundred of our strongest prawn and fish soldiers to arrest and charge Alligator immediately. At the same time arrange a banquet as an apology to the Great Sage."

"There's no need to worry so, Your Majesty," said Monkey. "I've already told you I'll let you off, so why bother with the banquet? But I would like to go with your son as my master has been wronged and my fellow–disciples are waiting for me."

The dragon king tried hard to make him stay, but without success. Then a dragon maiden came in with tea, a cup of which Monkey drank standing up before taking his leave of the old dragon and leaving the Western Sea with Mo'ang and his troops. Soon they were back at the Black River, where Monkey said, "Catch the demon, Your Royal Highness, while I wait on the bank."

"Don't worry, Great Sage," said Mo'ang. "I'll arrest him show him to you, Great Sage, to sentence and punish, and return your master to you. Only then will I take him back to the ocean and see my father."

Monkey took leave of him cheerfully, recited the water–repelling spell and made it with his hands, sprang out of the waves, and made straight for the East bank, where Friar Sand and the river god said, "When you went it was by air, so why have you come back from under the water?" Monkey told them all about how he had killed the fish spirit, taken the invitation, charged the dragon king, and brought soldiers back with the dragon prince.

Friar Sand was very pleased, and they all stood on the bank waiting.

Prince Mo'ang sent a herald to the gates of the underwater palace to announce to the evil spirit, "Prince Mo'ang, son of the Old Dragon King of the Western Sea, is here." This news aroused the suspicions of the evil spirit as he sat inside.

"I sent a black fish spirit with an invitation to my uncle some time ago," he thought, "and I haven't had any answer yet. Why is my cousin

here instead?"

As he was thinking, a little demon came in from a river patrol to report, "Your Majesty, there's a detachment of troops camped in the river West of the palace. Their banner says 'Young Marshal Mo'ang, Crown Prince and Son of the Dragon King of the Western Sea.'"

"That cousin of mine is outrageous," said the monster. "Presumably my uncle couldn't come and sent him to the feast instead, but he didn't have to bring an army with him. Hmm. There must be something up."

"Little ones," he said, "get my armor and my steel flail ready in case things turn rough while I go out to greet him and see what's happening." On hearing the orders all the devils rubbed their hands and got ready.

Chapter 43

604

Journey to the West

When the alligator came out he saw a whole force of sea soldiers camped there on the right: Embroidered sashes and flying banners,

Coloured halberds brighter than the dawn,

Fine swords coldly gleaming,

Spears with many a handsome tassel,

Bows drawn back like the moon,

Arrows like teeth of wolves,

Dazzling broadswords,

Grit—hard maces.

There were whales, turtles, and clams,

Crabs, tortoises, fish and prawns,

All drawn up by size,

Their weapons as dense—packed as a field of hemp.

Unless ordered by a superior officer

None would dare advance upon them.

When the alligator demon saw them he went straight to the gates of their camp and shouted at the top of his voice, "Cousin, I'm waiting for you here with an invitation."

A conch patrolling the camp went straight to the commander's tent to report, "Your Royal Highness, Alligator Dragon is outside with an invitation."

The prince felt the helmet on his head, tightened the jeweled belt round his waist, picked up a three–edged mace, and hurried out of the camp. "What invitation do you have for me?" he asked.

Alligator Dragon bowed and replied, "This morning I sent your father an invitation. No doubt he did not think it worth coming and sent you instead. But why did you have to bring an army with you? Why have you encamped here armed to the teeth?"

"What did you invite my father to?" the crown prince asked.

"Since I have been living here as a result of his kindness I have not seen his illustrious countenance for a long time or done my duty by him," the alligator replied. "Yesterday I caught a priest from the East who has, they Chapter 43

say, cultivated his conduct for ten lives in succession. If you eat his body you can live much longer. I wanted to invite uncle to have a look at the priest before I cook him in the steamer as a birthday treat."

"Complete and utter fool," yelled the crown prince. "Do you know who that priest is?"

"He's a priest from the Tang who's going to fetch scriptures from the Western Heaven," the demon replied.

"All you know is that he's a Tang priest," said the crown prince. "What you don't realize is what powerful disciples he has."

"He's got one long–snouted one called Pig who I've captured already and I'm going to steam with the Tang Priest," the alligator demon

replied. "There's another disciple called Friar Sand, a dusky fellow with a sinister face who fights with the quarterstaff. He came to my gates yesterday demanding his master. I came out at the head of my river troops and it didn't take me long to see him off with my steel flail. I don't see what's so powerful about him."

"You still haven't got the message," the dragon prince replied. "His senior disciple is the Golden Immortal of the Supreme Ultimate, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who made havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago.

He's now escorting the Tang Priest on his way to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures in the Western Heaven. He was converted by the compassionate and merciful Bodhisattva Guanyin of Potaraka, who changed his name to Sun Wukong the Novice. Why ever did you have to bring this catastrophe on yourself? He came across a messenger of yours in our ocean, took the invitation, and went straight into our crystal palace to make things very awkward for my father and myself. He has us on a charge of conspiring with evil spirits to kidnap.

You'd better bring the Tang Priest and Pig straight to the bank, hand them back to the Great Sage Monkey, and join me in making apologies to him if you want to keep alive. If you even hint at a 'no' you can forget about remaining here in one piece."

This threw the alligator monster into a terrible rage. "My own cousin taking their side!" he exclaimed. "You'd have me hand the Tang Priest over, but nothing comes that easy in this world. Just because you're scared of him it doesn't mean that I am. If he's really got such powers and he has the guts to go three rounds with me in front of my palace gates I'll give him his master back. If he's no match for me I'll capture him too and cook him with the others. And this time there'll be no guests or relations; I'll fasten the doors, my little ones will sing and dance for me, and I'll sit in the place of honour and have a fine old time bloody well eating them myself."

"Damned devil," the crown prince swore back at him, "you're a disgrace. Even if you're not going to regard the Great Sage Monkey as a worthy foe will you dare to fight me?"

"A tough guy is afraid of nobody," the demon replied. He then called for his armor, at which a host of little devils came forward with his armor and his steel flail. The two of them were now glaring at each other and each wanted to play the hero. The orders were given, the

drums rolled, and a fight ensued that was much harder than the one with Friar Sand. What could be seen were:

Dazzling banners,

Gleaming halberds.

The encampment was quickly broken up,

Chapter 43

606

Journey to the West

While the gates of the palace were opened wide.

Prince Mo'ang wielded his golden mace;

That alligator parried with his flail.

Fierce were the river soldiers as the cannon roared;

Wild were the ocean warriors as the gong was beaten.

Shrimp fought with shrimp,

And crab with crab.

Whales and giant turtles swallowed red carp;

Bream and carp set mollusks running.

The shark and mullet put the mackerel to flight;

The mussels all panicked when oysters captured clams.

The swordfish barbs were hard as iron rods;

The barracudas needles were sharper than spears.

Sturgeons chased the white eel;

Perch and herring seized the back pomfret.

The river was full of battling demons,

While both side's dragon warriors contended.

The long melee stirred up the waves,

And Crown Prince Mo'ang was better than a vajrapani,

As he roared and struck at the head with his mace,

Capturing the alligator who caused the trouble.

The prince pretended to drop his guard with his three – bladed mace. Not realizing that this was a trick, the evil spirit rushed him, whereupon the crown prince skillfully first struck him a blow with the mace on the right arm that made him stumble, caught up with him, then struck at his feet and set him sprawling.

The ocean soldiers rushed up, seized Alligator, tied both hands behind his back, put an iron chain through his collar bone, hauled him up on the bank, and took him to Monkey, where the prince reported, "Great Sage, I have arrested the alligator demon and am handing him over to you for judgement."

Chapter 43

"You disobedient wretch," said Monkey when he and Friar Sand saw the demon, "your uncle sent you to live here, build up your nature, and look after yourself. Once you had made your name he was going to transfer you to duties somewhere else. Why did you have to seize the river god's home and become a bully? Why did you use deception to capture my master and my brother? I was going to hit you, but this cudgel of mine hits so hard that a mere touch of it would finish you off. Where have you put my master?"

"Great Sage," replied the demon, kowtowing ceaselessly, "this humble alligator had never heard of your mighty name. But now I have been arrested by my cousin for my disobedience to him and for my flagrant offences against right. I am endlessly grateful to you, Great Sage, for sparing my life. Your master is still tied up in the water palace. If you would take off the chain and untie my hands I will return to the river and bring him back to you."

"Great Sage," said Prince Mo'ang who was standing beside them, "he is a vicious and deceitful beast. If you were to release him he might have evil ideas."

"I know where his place is," said Friar Sand. "I'll find the master."

He and the river god then leapt into the river and went straight to the doors of the water palace, which were wide open and not guarded by a single soldier. Inside the pavilion they saw the Tang Priest and Pig tied up stark naked. Friar Sand quickly untied the master while the

river god released Pig. Next they each carried one up to the surface of the water and then to the bank.

Seeing the evil spirit roped and in chains there Pig raised his rake to strike him and said abusively, "Evil beast, take this from me."

Monkey held him back, saying, "Spare his life, brother, out of consideration for Ao Shun and his son."

Mo'ang then bowed and said, "Great Sage, I must not stay here any longer. As I have rescued your master I shall now take this wretch to see my father. You have spared him the death penalty, but my father will not let him off other kinds of punishment. When he has been sentenced he will be sent back to apologize to you again."

"Very well then," said Monkey, "take him away. Give my respects to your father and tell him that I'll be back to thank him in person another time." The prince then plunged into the water with his prisoner and took his ocean troops straight back to be Western Sea.

The God of the Black River then thanked Brother Monkey for the recovery of his water palace. "Disciple,"

said the Tang Priest, "we're still on the Eastern bank. How are we going to get across this river?"

"Don't worry about that, my lord," said the river god. "Please mount your horse and I will lead you across the river." The master then rode his horse while Pig led it, Friar Sand carried the luggage, and Monkey supported Sanzang. The river god did water–stopping magic to hold the waters back. In an instant a broad road opened up where the waters had withdrawn; master and disciples crossed to the West bank, climbed it, thanked the river god, and continued on their way. Indeed:

To visit the West the priest they did save;

When the river was crossed there was never a wave.

Chapter 43

If you don't know how they visited the Buddha and obtained the scriptures, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 44

Evil in the Heart's Centre Crosses

the Backbone Pass

There is a poem that goes:

They travel West escaping dangers to seek the scriptures;

Nor can they stop at all the famous mountains.

They press on night and day, starting crows and hares;

The seasons turn amid falling blossom and bird – song.

In the dust under one's eyes are three thousand worlds;

Four hundred prefectures rest on the head of a staff.

Sleeping in dew and dining on wind they climb the purple slope;
Never knowing when they will be able to start back.

The story tells how after the dragon prince had subdued the demon and the God of the Black River had divided the waters, master and disciples crossed the Black River and took the main trail West. They faced wind and snow, and traveled under the moon and the stars. After they had been going for a long time it was early spring again.

The sun returns;

All comes back to life.

The sun returns;

Beauty fills the sky like an opened scroll.

All comes hack to life,

As flowers cover the earth with embroidered cushions.

A few snowflakes of plum blossom remain,

While the wheat spreads like a sea of cloud.

In the gentle thaw the mountain spring now flows,

The new shoots grow and cover the burnt—out stubble.

Tai Hao governs the East,

The Wood God rules the dawn.

Above the fragrance and the warming breeze

The clouds disperse and the sun shines anew.

Willows spread their green beside the path,

Enriching rain brings spring to all that lives.

Master and disciples were ambling along enjoying the view when all of a sudden they heard a mighty shout like a war—cry from a thousand throats. Sanzang was terrified. He reined in his horse, unable to take another step forward. "Wukong," he said, looking back at him, "where is that noise from?"

"It sounded like an earthquake or a landslide," said Pig.

"Or thunder," said Friar Sand.

"Or people shouting and horses neighing," said Sanzang.

"You're all wrong," laughed Monkey. "Just wait a moment while I go and take a look."

Splendid Monkey. With one bound he was on a cloud and up in the air looking all around. In the distance he could make out a walled city, and when he went close he could see that it had a haze of auspicious light over it with no sign of any evil emanations. "It's a good place," he sighed to himself, "but why was there that terrible noise? I can't see war banners or spears there, and there's no sound of cannon. So why was there a noise like shouting and neighing?"

Just as he was debating all this with himself he noticed a big crowd of Buddhist monks on a sandbank outside the city gates, pulling a cart. The noise that had startle Sanzang was them all shouting. "King Powerful Bodhisattva."

When he slowly lowered his cloud for a better look he saw that the

cart was loaded with kiln bricks, tiles, wood and adobe bricks. Above the sandbank was a high ridge, along the top of which ran a narrow track between two great gates. Below the gates the paths all went straight down the steep sides of the ridge: the cart could not possibly be pulled up there. Although the weather was so mild and pleasant the monks were all dressed in rags and looked thoroughly poverty – stricken.

Chapter 44

610

Journey to the West

"I suppose they must be building a monastery," thought Monkey, "and are having to do the work themselves because it's harvest – time here and they can't hire any labor." He was still not sure when he saw two young Taoist priests come swaggering out through the city gates. Just see how they were dressed: Star crowns on their heads,

Brocade and embroidered clothes.

The star crowns on their heads shine bright,

The brocade and embroidered clothes float like sunset clouds.

On their feet are cloud – treading shoes,

Round their waists are silken belts.

Handsome and clever faces, round as the moon;

Bodies as elegant as the immortals in Heaven.

The approach of the Taoists made the Buddhist monks all shake with fear as they redoubled their efforts and pulled harder than ever at the cart.

"Ah!" thought Monkey as he realized what was up. "The monks must be scared of the Taoists. Why else would they be pulling so hard? I've heard people tell of a place on the way to the West where they believe in Taoism and persecute Buddhist monks. This must be it. I was going to report back to the master, but he'll be angry with me if I don't discover what it's all about. He'll say that a clever chap like me ought to be able to find out the truth. I'll go down and ask what's happening so I can tell the master."

But whom was he to ask? The splendid Great Sage shook himself and turned into the likeness of a wandering Quanzhen Taoist with a food basket over his left arm as he beat on a bamboo drum and sang Taoist songs.

Monkey walked towards the city gates and bowed in greeting to the two Taoists, saying, "Humble greetings, elders in the Way."

"Where are you from, sir?" the Taoists asked, returning his greeting.

"I wander and roam from the corners of the sea to the edge of the sky," Monkey replied. "I am here today to beg from some pious household. Could you two elders tell me which streets and which alleys in this city love the Way and its followers? I would like to beg for some food."

"What a depressing way to talk, sir," said one of the Taoist priests with a laugh.

"What's so depressing about it?" Monkey asked.

"Isn't it depressing that you want to beg for food?" asked the priest.

"But we men of religion have to live by begging," said Brother Monkey. If we don't, we can't buy our food."

The Taoist priest laughed again and replied, "You're a stranger here and you don't know about our city. Here it's not just the civil and military officials, the rich and the elderly who love the Way and its followers. Young and old, men and women alike, everyone offers us food when they see us. But all that is hardly worth mentioning. By far the most important thing is that His Majesty the king is a devout lover of the Way and its followers."

"I'm young," said Monkey, "and I'm a stranger from far away. I didn't know that. Could I trouble you two elders to do a fellow–believer a favour? Tell me more about what this place is called and how the king shows his love for the Way and its worthies."

"This country is called Tarrycart," the Taoist priest replied, "and His

Majesty is close to us."

When Monkey heard this he said with a chuckle, "Can it be that a Taoist priest is monarch?"

"No," he replied. "For twenty years there was a drought here, and not a drop of rain fell. Nothing could grow.

Everyone – –king, ministers, commoners, the high and the humble – –all bathed, burnt incense and prayed to Heaven for rain. When they were in really desperate straits three immortals were sent from Heaven to save all living beings."

"Which three?" Monkey asked.

"Our masters," the Taoist priest replied.

"May I ask their titles?" Monkey asked. "Our senior master is the Great Immortal Tiger Power," the Taoist replied, "our second master is the Great Immortal Deer Power, and the third master is the Great Immortal Antelope Power."

"What sort of magic can your three masters perform?" Monkey asked.

"They can summon up wind and rain with a flick of the hand," the Taoist said, "and change water into oil or stone into gold as easily as turning around. Their magic arts enable them to control the creation of heaven and earth, or to alter the positions of the stars. Our king and his ministers treat them with great respect and they are now relations of ours."

"Your king is very fortunate," said Monkey. "As the saying goes, magic moves ruler and minister alike. If your masters have those powers and the king treats them as his relations they must have been very good to him. Oh dear! I don't suppose that a poor Taoist like myself is fated to meet your venerable masters."

"No, problem about meeting them," said the Taoist. "We two are his favorite disciples. Besides, our masters are such lovers of the Way and its followers that they only need to hear the word 'Way' to come right outside to welcome a visitor. For us to take you in there would be as easy as blowing away ashes."

Monkey chanted a deep and respectful "re – e – er" and then said, "I would be very grateful for an introduction.

Let's go in."

"Wait a moment," said the Taoist. "You sit here while we finish the jobs we have to do, then we'll go in together."

"Priests ought to be completely free and unconstrained," said Monkey. "What jobs do you have to do?"

Chapter 44

612

Journey to the West

The Taoist pointed toward the Buddhist monks on the sandbank and said, "They're working for us, and we have to call the roll to make sure they don't start slacking."

"You elders have got it wrong," said Monkey with a smile. "We Buddhist and Taoist monks are all men of religion. They shouldn't be working for us and answering roll—calls."

"You wouldn't know that when we were all praying for ram the year the Buddhists were on one side praying to Buddha while we were on the other side praying to the Great Bear. We both asked the court for grain, but the Buddhists turned out to be useless. They got no results by reciting their sutras and didn't help in the least.

It was our masters who came along, called up wind and rain, and saved the people from their distress. The king was so angry with those useless Buddhists that he had their monasteries torn down and their Buddha—statues smashed. He revoked their ordination licenses and refused to let them go home. Instead he gave them to us to work for us as slaves. They do all our cooking and cleaning and they look after our gates.

Because our residence out here hasn't been finished yet we've made the Buddhists drag the bricks, tiles and timber here to do the building for us. We two have been sent here to keep an eye on them and make sure they don't start slacking."

When Monkey heard this he held on to them and said through his tears, "I said I wasn't fated to meet your masters and I was right."

"Why won't you meet them?" the Taoist asked.

"I have come here on my wanderings for two reasons," said Monkey. "One is to make a living, and the other is to find a relation."

"What relation?" the Taoist asked.

"I have an uncle," Monkey replied, "who left home to have his head shaved and become a Buddhist monk when he was very young. During a famine years ago he went away to beg. He hasn't been back since, and I'm looking for him out of a sense of duty to our forebears. I expect he's been detained here and can't escape, but there's no way of knowing. If I could just have a look for him and see him I'd be able to go into town with you after that."

"No problem," said the Taoist. "We'll sit here while you go down to the sand and check them over for us. Just make sure there are five hundred of them. See if your uncle is among them. If he is, we'll release him as you're a fellow Taoist. Then we can go into town together."

Monkey was very grateful indeed. He bowed to them with his hands raised and headed straight for the sandbank, playing his bamboo drum. Once he was through the two sets of gates and had gone down the ridge the monks all knelt and kowtowed to him.

"Master," one of the monks said, "we're not slacking. Every one of the five hundred of us is here and all pulling that cart."

At this Monkey smiled to himself and thought with a grin he did not show, "Those Taoists have got them so scared that they're even frightened of an imitation Taoist like me. If I were a real Taoist they'd die of fright."

Then Monkey said aloud with a wave of his hands, "Don't kneel, and don't be afraid. I'm not the supervisor.

I'm here to look for a relation." Once they heard him talk about looking for a relation, the monks all crowded round, craning forward, coughing and making other noises in their eagerness to be picked out.

"Who's his relation?" they all wondered. Monkey looked them all over

for a while then started chuckling aloud.

"My lord," the monk said, "if you can't find your relation among us, what is there to laugh about?"

"Do you know why I'm laughing?" Monkey asked. "It's because all you monks are failures. You were born under unlucky stars. Your parents were only prepared to let you become monks because you brought them bad luck or because you were destined to have no sisters. Why ever are you working for Taoists like slaves instead of honoring the Three Treasures, respecting the Buddha's Dharma, reading sutras and performing ceremonies of repentance?"

"You put us to shame, my lord," the monk replied. "You must be a stranger here, sir, who doesn't understand the situation."

"Indeed I am," Monkey replied, "and indeed I don't."

"Our king," said the Buddhist monk in tears, "is prejudiced and unreasonable. He only likes the followers of Lao Zi, and he hates us Buddhists."

"Why?" Monkey asked.

"Because three immortals came here to call up wind and rain," the monk replied. "They ruined everything for us and won the king's confidence. He has destroyed our monasteries, revoked our ordination licenses, and refused to let us return to our homes. And the form of forced labor he imposed on us was to give us to the immortals to work for them. It's unbearably hard. When you come here, wandering Taoist, you will only have to call on the king to be richly rewarded. But any Buddhist monk who comes, whether from around here or from far away, is arrested and put to work for the immortals."

"I suppose the Taoists must use some magic powers to worm their way into the king's confidence," said Monkey. "Calling up winds and rain is small – time magic used by unorthodox sects, and hardly enough to win a king's heart."

"They can refine mercury from cinnabar, sit in meditation, turn water into oil, and change stones into gold,"

the monk replied. "They have now built a Temple of the Three Pure Ones where they read scriptures and perform ceremonies to heaven and earth night and day to obtain eternal life for His Majesty. That is why the king's heart has been moved."

"So it's like that, is it?" said Monkey. "You may all go now."

"But, my lord, we can't get away," the monk replied. "The immortals persuaded the king to have pictures of monks painted, and these have been sent to be displayed in every ward and by every river. Tarrycart is a big country, but in every city, prefecture, county town, village, hamlet, inn and market – place there hangs a picture of Buddhist monks with this notice on it in the king's own handwriting: Any official who captures a monk will be promoted three grades. Any commoner not holding office who captures a monk will receive a reward of fifty ounces of silver.

That's why we can't escape. It's not just us Buddhist monks. Anyone who's had a short haircut or who's bald or whose hair is thinning finds it hard not to get arrested. Agents and policemen are everywhere. There's no way we can possibly escape. We have no choice: we can only suffer here."

"In that case you'd all better die," said Monkey.

"My lord," said the Buddhist monk, "many of us have already. There were over two thousand of us altogether, both us local monks and those arrested from elsewhere. Six or seven hundred of us have died and about the same number have killed themselves because they could not bear the pain, the searing heat, the bitter cold, or the local conditions. We five hundred are the only survivors."

"How have you managed to stay alive?" Monkey asked.

"The rope broke when we tried to hang ourselves, or it did not even hurt when we tried to slit our own throats, or we floated and did not drown when we jumped into the river, or the poison we took didn't harm us."

"You're all very lucky then," said Monkey. "Heaven has given each of you perpetual life."

"Sir," said the monk, "you've left one word out. It's a perpetual life sentence. For our three meals every day all we get is a thin gruel of brown rice. At night we have to sleep on the sandbank in the open.

Luckily spirits come to protect us when we close our eyes."

"I expect you see ghosts because you're so exhausted," said Monkey.

"No," said the Buddhist monk. "They're the Six Dings, the Six Jias, and the Guardians of the Faith. But they can only protect us at night, except when they come to save the life of any of us who is on the point of death."

"That's very wrong of the spirits," said Brother Monkey. "They shouldn't be protecting you like that. They should let you die and be reborn in the Western Heaven as soon as possible."

"They come to us in our dreams," said the monk, "and give us advice like, 'Don't try to die. Hole out till a holy priest comes from the East, and arhat who will go to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures. He has a disciple of immense magical powers, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. He has a good and loyal heart, he rights wrongs, he saves those in distress and he helps widows and orphans. Wait till he shows his divine powers, wipes out the Taoist priests, and restores our Dhyana faith to its proper respect.'"

This pleased Monkey, though he did not show it as he thought,

"Whoever said that Monkey had no powers to his name?

Before I even got here gods and spirits spread my fame."

He then hurried off, taking his leave of the monks and beating his bamboo drum as he headed for the city gates to see the Taoist priests again. "Which of them is your respected uncle?" they asked.

"All five hundred of them are my relations," Monkey replied.

"How can you possibly have so many?" they asked again.

"A hundred were my neighbors who lived to the left of us," Monkey replied, "and another hundred lived to the right. A hundred are my father's kin, and a hundred are related to my mother. The last hundred are my own friends and acquaintances. If you are willing to release them all, I'll go into the city with you; but if you won't, I won't."

"You must be off your head, talking such nonsense," the Taoist priests replied. "All those Buddhist monks were presented to us by His Majesty. Even if we released just one or two of them we'd have to cover up by handing in sick notes for them to our masters then filling out death certificates. We couldn't possibly release the whole lot of them. It would be outrageous, quite outrageous. We'd have no servants and the king would be very angry with us. The ward head is always sending officials to check up, and sometimes the king even comes to count them himself. We couldn't possibly let them go."

"You couldn't?" said Monkey.

"No," the priests replied. By the time he had asked this and been given the same answer three times he was in a terrible rage. He produced his iron cudgel from his ear, created a spell with his hands, made it as thick as a rice bowl, swung it, and brought it down on the Taoists' faces. The poor Taoists Fell to the ground with their blood gushing out and their heads split open, Wounds that were gaping wide, brains scattered everywhere, both necks broken.

When the Buddhist monks faraway on the strand saw Monkey kill the two Taoists they abandoned their cart and came running over saying, "This is awful, this is awful. You've killed the king's relations."

"Who are the king's relations?" Monkey asked.

The monks fenced him in with their earth—moving baskets and said, "Their masters don't have to greet the king when they enter the throne hall or take leave of him when they go. The king addresses them as 'Elder Brother Teacher'. Why did you have to come here to get us into this terrible trouble. It was nothing to do with you that their disciples came to supervise the work. What's to become of us now that they've been killed?

We'll have to take you into town to report their deaths."

"Do stop that yelling, gentlemen," said Monkey with a smile. "I'm not really a wandering Quanzhen Taoist.

I'm here to rescue you."

"But by killing them you've only made things worse for us," they said. "How can you say you're here to rescue us?"

"I'm Sun Wukong the Novice," Monkey replied, "the disciple of the holy priest from the Great Tang, and I've come here specially to save

you."

"No, you're not," the monk said. "We know what that great lord looks like."

"But how could you?" Monkey asked. "You've never met him."

"We've seen an old man in a dream who told us he was the Great White Planet. He told us what Sun the Novice, or Monkey, looks like so that we wouldn't confuse him with anyone else."

"How did the Planet describe him to you?" Monkey asked him.

To this the Buddhist monk replied, "He told us that the Great Sage has A brow that seems split open, two flashing of eyes of gold,

A head that's round, a hairy face, and sunken cheeks, we're told.

Out of a pointed muzzle sharp little teeth protrude;

He looks much like a thunder god, and his Conduct's very crude.

He wields a cudgel of iron with ends banded in gold

With which he smashed the Heavenly gates as a rebel in times of old.

Now he has seen the light of the faith he's escorting his master, And saves whoever he can from death and disaster."

Monkey was both angry and pleased to hear this. He was pleased that his fame had been spread, but thought angrily, "That old rascal, telling these ordinary mortals what I really look like."

Then he found himself speaking aloud and saying, "Gentlemen, you're quite right that I'm not Sun the Novice.

I'm only a servant of his who's come here to fool around and practice making trouble. But Sun the Novice is coming— —look over there!" He pointed East, tricking all the monks into turning away while he resumed his true appearance.

Only then did they realize who he really was, and fell to the ground to kowtow and say, "My lord, because we have only mortal eyes we failed to recognize you in your disguise. We beg you to go into the city, subdue evil, and save and avenge us."

"Come with me then," said Monkey, and the monks followed him closely.

The Great Sage went straight to the sandbank and used magic to make the cart go through the two gates and along the ridge then lift itself right up and smash itself to smithereens. The bricks, tiles and timber all went tumbling down the slope. "Scatter," he told the monks, "and keep away from me until I've seen the king and wiped out those Taoists tomorrow."

"But, my lord," the Buddhist monk said, "we dare not go far. We're frightened of being arrested by officials and brought back here to be flogged and punished in other ways. It would only make things worse for us."

"In that case I'll give you some magical protection," said Monkey. The splendid Great Sage then pulled out a handful of hairs and chewed them into little pieces, one of which he gave to each of the monks. "Keep it Chapter 44

inside the nail of your third finger, bunch you fingers together, and just keep walking," he told them. "Nothing will happen unless somebody tries to arrest you. If anyone does, clench your fist and shout, 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven.' Then I'll come and protect you."

"But, my lord," the monk said, "what if you're far away and out of sight? What if you don't come when we call? Whatever shall we do?"

"Don't worry yourselves," said Monkey. "I'll keep you completely safe even if I'm thousands of miles away."

One of the bolder spirits among the monks clenched his fist and said "Great Sage Equaling Heaven" under his breath. A figure like a thunder god holding an iron cudgel appeared before him, so terrifying that not even a huge army would not have dared to approach him. Then over a hundred of the monks called out, and over a hundred Great Sages appeared to protect them.

"Truly a miracle, my lord," the monks all said, kowtowing.

Monkey then told them to say "Quiet" for their protectors to disappear again. They then all said "Quiet," and the pieces of hair were once more tucked behind their fingernails. Only then were the monks all happy to disperse and make their escapes.

"Don't go too far," said Brother Monkey, "and keep your ears open for news of me. If a notice is issued recalling Buddhist monks, come to the city and return my hair." The five hundred monks then scattered in all directions; some went away and some stayed where they were.

The story switches back to Sanzang, who gave up waiting beside the track for Monkey to report back and told Pig to lead the horse Westward. They met monks hurrying away, and when they were close to the city wall they found Monkey with a dozen or so monks who had not yet gone. "Wukong," said Sanzang, reining in his horse, "why did it take you so long to get back from investigating that noise?" Monkey led the dozen or so monks in performing obeisances before Sanzang's horse and then told him everything that happened. Sanzang was horrified: "What are we to do if that's the way it is?"

"Please don't worry, my lord," said the dozen or so monks. "His Honour the Great Sage Monkey is a god down from Heaven whose divine powers are tremendous. He will most certainly be able to protect you. We are monks from the Deep Wisdom Monastery, a royal foundation in the city. Because our monastery was founded by the great–grandfather of the present king and there is a statue of him there, the monastery has not been demolished, although all the others in the city, big and small alike, have been torn down. We would like to invite you to come straight into town to stay in our humble monastery. The Great Sage Monkey is bound to find some way of coping at court tomorrow morning."

"You are right," said Monkey. "Very well then, let us go into the city without further delay."

The venerable elder then dismounted and went on foot to the city gate. The sun was setting in the West as they crossed the drawbridge and went in through the triple gates. People in the streets turned away when they saw the monks of the Deep Wisdom Monastery leading a horse and carrying luggage. When they reached the monastery gates the travelers saw a large sign over them reading DEEP WISDOM MONASTERY: FOUNDED BY ROYAL COMMAND.

The monks pushed the gates open and led them through the Hall of the Vajrapanis before opening the doors of the main hall of the monastery. Sanzang covered himself with his cassock and worshipped the Buddha before Chapter 44

entering.

"Steward!" the monks called, and an old monk came out who kowtowed to Monkey the moment he saw him.

"My lord, are you really here?" he said.

"Do you know which lord I am, bowing like that?" Monkey asked.

"I can see that you are Lord Sun, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven," the old monk replied. "We see you in our dreams every night; the Great White Planet is always coming in them to tell us that we will only be saved when you arrive. Now that I have beheld your distinguished countenance I know that it is the same as in our dreams. I am glad you are here so soon, my lord. Had you been a day or two later we would all have become ghosts by then."

"Please get up," said Monkey. "Things will be sorted out tomorrow." The monks then laid on a vegetarian meal for the master and his disciples and tidied up the abbot's lodgings for them to stay in. They settled down for the night.

A little before midnight Monkey, who had too much on his mind to go to sleep, heard music outside, got up quietly, dressed, and sprang into the air to look around. To the South he saw lamps and candles burning bright, and when he brought his cloud lower for a close look he saw that in the Temple of the Three Pure Ones the Taoists were performing a star ritual. What he saw was

The high hall of the sanctum,

The true holy shrine.

The high hall of the sanctum

Was as majestic as Penghu's magic isle;

The true holy shrine

Was mysteriously pure like the Huale Temple.

On either side the Taoist priests played pan – pipes

While the celebrant in the center held a tablet of jade.

They explained The Elimination of Disaster

And preached on The Way and its Power.

When the dust – raising dance was over the talismans were issued;
After making divine petition all lay down in respect.

When the water had been blessed and the spirits summoned,

The fluttering flames of the candles rose up to the sky.

When the Pole Star was located and the Dipper paced out,

Clouds of fragrant incense filled the void.

Fresh food was offered on the votive tables,

And a rich repast of meatless food laid out.

In front of the hall hung a pair of yellow brocade vertical scrolls on which were embroidered these words: May winds and rains come as they should;

We pray for the boundless power of the Heavenly Honoured Ones.

May rivers and seas be pure and peaceful;

We beg for many a year of life for His Majesty.

Monkey saw three old Taoists wearing their religious robes; he took them to be the Great Immortals Tiger Power, Deer Power and Antelope Power. Standing below them to either side were a crowd of seven or eight hundred Taoists holding drums, bells, incense and divine petitions. Monkey was delighted.

"I had meant to go down and fool around with them by myself," he

thought, "but one strand of silk can't make a thread, and one hand can't clap. I think I'll go back and do Friar Sand and Pig a good turn by letting them join in the game with me."

Monkey then landed his auspicious cloud and went straight into the abbot's lodgings, where he found Pig and Friar Sand sleeping top to toe. Monkey first called Friar Sand, who woke up and said, "Aren't you asleep yet, brother?"

"Get up," said Monkey. "We're going to have a good feed."

"Whatever sort of good feed can I have in the middle of the night when my throat's dried out and my eyes are all bleary?" Friar Sand asked.

"There's the Temple of the Three Pure Ones in this city where the Taoist priests are holding a service,"

Brother Monkey replied. "The Hall of the Three Pure Ones is full of offerings: steamed buns as big as a bucket, cakes that must weight fifty or sixty pounds apiece, any amount of rice, and fresh fruit too. Let's go and have some."

The talk of all this good food was enough to wake Pig up. "Won't you take me too, brother?" he asked.

"If you want a feed," said Monkey, "keep your voice down and don't wake the master. Come with me."

Chapter 44

The two of them dressed, slipped outside, and leapt up by cloud with Monkey. As soon as the idiot saw the lights he wanted to attack, but Monkey held him back and said, "Steady on. We'll go down when they've all gone."

"But their recitations are only just warming up," said Pig. "They won't want to go."

"I'll do some magic that will send them packing," said Monkey.

The splendid Great Sage said the words and made the hand movements of a spell, drew in a breath from the quarter of the wind,

and blew a gale so terrible that as it tore into the Hall of the Three Pure Ones it knocked down all the vases, candlesticks, and offerings on the walls and put out all the lamps. The Taoists all shook with terror.

"You had better go, disciples," said the Great Immortal Tiger Power. "This divine wind has blown out all the lamps and the incense, so you should all go back to bed. Get up early tomorrow morning and recite some more scriptures to make the numbers up." The Taoists then did indeed all withdraw.

Monkey then led Pig and Friar Sand to land their clouds, and they charged straight into the Hall of the Three Pure Ones. The idiot grabbed some food, not caring whether it was cooked or raw, and was just about to eat it when Monkey raised his iron cudgel to hit him. Pig pulled back his hand and said, "You're going to hit me before I've even tasted anything."

"Don't act so low," said Monkey. "You must pay your respects and sit down before eating."

"You're shameless," said Pig. "You steal food and expect me to pay my respects too. What would I have had to do if we'd been properly invited?"

"Do you know who the three Bodhisattvas sitting up there are?" Monkey asked. "Can't you recognize the Three Pure Ones themselves?" asked Pig. "How could you possibly think they are Bodhisattvas?"

"What about those Three Pure Ones?" Monkey asked. "Oh well," said Pig, "the one in the middle is the Original Celestial Pure One, the one on the left is the Precious Pure One, and the one on the right is the Supreme Lord Lao Zi."

"We've got to make ourselves look like them before we can eat in safety," said Monkey. The delicious smells of the offerings were making the idiot desperate with hunger, so he climbed on the pedestal of the statue and knocked Lord Lao Zi off it with one shove of his snout.

"You've sat here for long enough, old man," he said. "It's my turn now."

Pig turned himself into the Supreme Lord Lao Zi, Monkey turned himself into the Original Celestial Pure One, and Friar Sand into the Precious Pure One. When the statues had all been pushed over and the three of them were sitting up there Pig grabbed a big steamed bun.

"Not so fast," said Monkey.

"But brother," protested Pig, "we've already made ourselves look like them. What are we waiting for?"

"Brother," said Monkey, "eating is much less important than not giving ourselves away. If one of the Taoists got up early to hit the bell or sweep the floor and tripped over a piece of one of the statues we've knocked over the news would be out. You'd better hide them."

"But where?" asked Pig. "I'm a stranger here and I don't know my way around."

"When we came in," said Monkey, "there was a little pair of double doors to the right with an awful stench coming out of them. It must be the place where the five kinds of grain prepare for reincarnation. Put them in there."

The idiot really did have some brute strength. When he leapt down he put the three statues over his shoulders and carried them out. On kicking those doors open he found that it was in fact a big lavatory.

"That Protector of the Horses certainly knows how to talk," he said with a laugh. "He even made up a fancy Taoist name for the shithouse ——'the place where the five kinds of grain prepare for reincarnation.'" Before tipping in the three statues he was carrying he mumbled a prayer:

"Three Pure Ones, Three Pure Ones, hear my prayer. We have come here from afar to wipe out evil spirits.

We wish to enjoy your offerings but there was nowhere we could sit. So we've had to borrow your pedestals for a while. You have been sitting there long enough, and now you can go into the cesspit. Normally you have no end of things to eat, and you are pure Taoists. But today you'll have to taste some filth and be stinking Heavenly Honoured Ones."

His prayer said, he threw them in with a great splash that covered half his tunic with evil—smelling liquid.

When he went hack into the hall Monkey asked him, "Did you hide them properly?"

"I hid them well enough," the idiot replied, "but I splashed some of that filthy water on my clothes. I hope the stench doesn't make you feel sick."

"Never mind," laughed Monkey, "come and eat now. But you'll have to clean up before we go outside." The idiot turned himself back into Lord Lao Zi and the three of them sat down to eat their fill. First they ate the steamed bread, and then they went on to the assorted cold dishes, the rice, the pastries, the buns, the biscuits, the pancakes, the doughnuts, and the steamed pies. They ate whatever they felt like, not caring whether it was hot or cold. Now Monkey was not much of a one for cooked food, so he just ate some fruit to keep the other two company. They cleaned everything up like shooting stars chasing the moon or a wind sweeping the clouds away. When there was nothing else left to eat they did not go, but stayed there chatting and entertaining themselves while they digested the meal.

What a thing to have done! There was a young Taoist priest who had just gone to bed in his dormitory by the Eastern cloister when he suddenly got up. "I left my handbell in the hall," he thought, "and if I lose it my master will be angry with me tomorrow."

"You go to sleep," he said to other priest who shared his bed, "while I go to look for it." He was in such a hurry that he did not put his underclothes back on but just pulled on his tunic and went straight to the main hall to look for his bell. He groped all around till he found it and was about to turn and leave when to his consternation he heard the sound of breathing. As he fled in alarm he tripped on a lichee stone and crashed to the ground, smashing his bell to pieces with a tremendous clang. Pig could not help roaring with laughter at this, which terrified the young Taoist out of his wits.

He staggered to the abbots lodgings, knocked on the doors and said, "Masters, disaster."

The three senior Taoist were not yet in bed, so they opened the doors and asked, "What disaster?"

"I'd lost my bell," said the young Taoist, shivering and shaking, "and was looking for it in the hall when I heard a loud laugh that all but scared me to death."

Chapter 44

"Fetch lanterns," said the senior Taoists on hearing this, "and see what evil creature it is." This order was passed on to the priests, young and old, in both cloisters, who all got up, lit lamps, and went to the main hall to look.

If you don't know what they found, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 45

In the Hall of the Three Pure Ones the Great Sage Leaves His Name In the Kingdom of Tarrycart the Monkey King Shows His Powers

The story tells how the Great Sage Monkey pinched Friar Sand with his left hand and Pig with his right. The two of them realized what was happening and sat there on high, their heads bowed in silence, while the Taoists lit their lamps and shone them all around as they searched. The three of them looked just as if they really were made of clay covered with gold leaf.

"If no evildoers have been here," said the Great Immortal Tiger Power, "how have the offerings all been eaten?"

"It looks as though people have eaten them," said the Great Immortal Deer Power. "The fruit with skins has all been peeled and the stones have all been spat out of the stone fruit. But why can't we see anybody?"

"There is no need to be so suspicious, brother," said the Great Immortal Antelope Power. "I think that the Heavenly Honoured Ones must have been moved by our reverence and respect in reciting scriptures and making readings day and night, and by the name of His Majesty. Evidently the Three Pure Lords came down to the mortal world to enjoy these offerings. I suggest that we should worship the Heavenly Honoured Ones before they fly away on their cranes. We should beg them for some holy water and golden elixir pills that we can present to His Majesty and thereby win credit for giving him immortality."

"A good idea," said Tiger Power. "Let there be music and recitation, my disciples," he ordered, "and bring me my ceremonial robes so that I may pace out the Dipper dance and pray for immortality for His

Majesty."

The young Taoists did as they were told and were soon neatly drawn up in two groups. At the sound of a stone chime they all began to recite in unison the *True Classic of the Way and Its Power of the Yellow Court.*

Throwing his religious cloak over his shoulders, Tiger Power took his jade tablet in his hands, performed the ritual dance raising the dust before the statues, prostrated himself in respect, and submitted the following memorial to the Pure Ones:

"In fear and trembling I bow my head in submission. We your subjects promote the faith and long for your pure emptiness. We are suppressing the low vulgarity of Buddhist monks and gaining respect for the brilliance of the Way. A holy temple has been built by command of His Majesty the King. Many an offering has been set out, and the dragon banners hang high; candles burn all night, and incense smokes throughout the day. We worship with complete sincerity, respect and devotion. Now that you have honoured us with your presence we beseech you before you go away in your immortal chariots to grant us tablets of golden elixir and holy water that we may present to His Majesty to bring him life as long as the Southern Hills."

Pig felt most uncomfortable at all this, and he murmured under his breath to Monkey, "We shouldn't have stayed to be prayed to after eating the stuff. How are we going to answer their prayers?"

Monkey gave him another pinch, opened his mouth, and called out, "Cease your worship, young immortals.

We have just come from a Peach Banquet, so we did not bring any golden elixir or holy water today. We will present you with some another day."

When the priests young and old heard the statue speaking they all twitched at their clothes and trembled as they said, "My lord, a living Heavenly Honoured One has come down to earth. Don't let him go. Whatever you do get him to give us a recipe for eternal life."

Tiger Power then stepped forward, bowed again, and said, "Raising the dust while kowtowing in the sincerity of my heart, your humble servant dutifully worships the Three Pure Ones. Since coming to this country we have promoted the Way and suppressed the Buddhist clergy. His Majesty adores the Way and respectfully wishes to prolong his years, which is why we held this great service to heaven and recited scriptures all night.

We are most fortunate that you Heavenly Honoured Ones have not disdained from descending in your holy chariots and have appeared in person. We beg you in your mercy to grant us the great boon of a little holy water to lengthen the lives of your disciples."

"They must be desperate to get it, praying for it again," muttered Friar Sand under his breath to Monkey, giving him a pinch.

"Then let's give them some," said Monkey.

"But where will we get it?" mumbled Pig.

"Watch me," said Monkey. "When I get some, you'll have some too." The Taoists had by now finished playing their music.

"Young immortals," said Brother Monkey, "there is no need to prostrate yourselves. I did not originally want to leave any holy water with you in case it destroyed your offspring of immortality, but there would be no difficulty at all about giving you some."

When the Taoists heard this they all prostrated themselves, kowtowed and said, "We beg and implore the Heavenly Honoured One to grant your disciples some in recognition of the respectful devotion. We have widely taught the Way and its power and won the respect of the king for our sect of mystery."

"Very well then," said Monkey, "fetch a vessel." The Taoists all once again kowtowed in thanks: Tiger Power, who liked to show off, carried in a great earthen jar that he placed in the hall. Deer Power put an earthenware dish on the table for offerings, and Antelope Power took the flowers out of a vase and put it between the other two containers.

"Withdraw from the hall, all of you," ordered Monkey, "and screen us off. The secrets of Heaven must not be revealed. Then we can give you some holy water." The priests then all prostrated themselves below the steps outside the hall and shut the doors.

Monkey then stood up, lifted his tiger–skin kilt, and filled the vase with stinking piss, to the delight of Pig, who said, "In all the years we've been brothers we've never done this before. I've just eaten, and you ask me to do such a thing." The idiot then lifted his clothes and noisily filled the earthenware dish. The sound was like that of a torrent pouring down a mountainside. Friar Sand half filled the earthen jar.

Chapter 45

624

Journey to the West

Then they all straightened their clothes, sat down again, and said, "Come and receive the holy water, young immortals."

The Taoist elders then pushed the screens aside and kowtowed in worship and gratitude. When the jar was carried out and put together with the vase and the dish they called, "Disciples, fetch me a cup to try some."

The younger Taoists fetched a teacup and handed it to the elders. The elder filled the cup, drained it, and made a show of wiping his mouth and smacking his lips.

"Is it good, brother?" asked Deer Power.

Pursing his lips together, the most senior of the elders said, "Not very. Tastes a bit off."

"Let me have a taste," said Antelope Power. When he had drunk a mouthful he said, "Tastes rather like pig's urine."

When Monkey heard this from where he was sitting up there he realized that his plans had been foiled. "I'm going to play a trick just for the hell of it for them to remember me by." Then he shouted:

"Oh, Way, Oh Way, what nonsense you imagine. What Three Pure Ones would ever descend to earth? Let me tell you our real names. We are Buddhist monks from the Great Tang, travelling West on imperial orders.

Having nothing else to do this pleasant evening we decided to come down to your temple halls. We had eaten the offerings and were sitting here chatting when you started kowtowing to us and

worshipping us. How did you expect us to reply. What you've been drinking there isn't holy water— —it's our piss."

Hearing this the Taoist priests shut the doors and started throwing rakes, brooms, tiles and stones wildly into the hall. Splendid Brother Monkey tucked Friar Sand under his left arm and Pig under his right, rushed out through the door and rode his cloud straight back to the abbot's lodgings in the Deep Wisdom Monastery. The three of them went back to bed without disturbing their master.

It was soon the third quarter of the fifth watch, when the king held his dawn court audience, at which the civil and military officials and the four hundred courtiers were all assembled under the crimson light of the silken lanterns and amid clouds of smoke from the incense burners.

At just this time the Tang Priest woke up and called, "Disciples, come with me when I go to show my passport and obtain an exit permit." Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand got out of bed and into their clothes quickly, then stood waiting in attendance on the master.

"Master," Monkey reported, "the king here trusts those Taoist priests. He promotes the Way and persecutes Buddhist monks. I'm afraid that if you say the wrong thing he'll refuse you an exit permit. We had better escort you to the palace."

The Tang Priest was delighted with this suggestion. He put on his brocade cassock, Monkey took the passport, Pig carried the begging bowl and Friar Sand the monastic staff. The luggage and the horse were entrusted to the care of the monks of the Deep Wisdom Monastery. They went straight to the Tower of Five Phoenixes at the palace gate, where they bowed to the eunuch on duty and told him their names. They said that they were monks from Great Tang in the East on their way to fetch the scriptures who had come to show their papers and obtain an exit permit, and they asked him to pass the message on.

The officer of the gate went straight to the throne hall where he prostrated himself by the steps and reported,

"There are four monks outside awaiting Your Majesty's command by the Tower of Five Phoenixes. They say they are from the Great Tang in the East and going to fetch scriptures." To this the king replied, "Do they have Chapter 45

to come looking for their deaths here? Can't they do it anywhere else? Why didn't the police capture them and bring them here under arrest?"

The king's tutor slipped forward to submit this memorial: "Great Tang in the East is in the Southern Continent of Jambu. It is known as the great land of China. It is over three thousand miles from here, and the way is beset with many a demon. These monks must have some magic powers if they dared to travel West. I beg You Majesty to receive these monks who have come from the far country of China, inspect their travel papers, and let them proceed. Then you will be preserving good relations with China." The king approved this suggestion.

The Tang Priest and his disciples were summoned to the throne hall, where they stood in a row before the steps and submitted their travel document to the king.

The king had just opened the document and started reading it when the eunuch gate officer came in to report again, "The three Teachers of the Nation are here." This threw the king into such a fluster that he put the paper away, hurried down from the throne, told his attendants to fetch embroidered stools, and went out to meet the Taoist masters.

Sanzang and his disciples turned round to look and saw the three Great Immortals come majestically in, followed by a pair of page boys with their hair in bunches. They walked straight in while the civil and military officers all bowed low, not daring to look up.

As they entered the throne hall they did not deign to bow to the king, who asked them, "Teachers of the Nation, why have you honoured us with your presence although we have not yet invited you?"

"I have something to report," the most senior of the Taoists replied. "Where are those four Buddhist monks from?"

"They have been sent from Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven," the king replied, "and they are here to obtain an exit permit." The three Taoists clapped their hands with delight at this news.

"We thought they had already gone, but they are still here."

"What do you mean, Teachers?" the king asked in astonishment. "They have only just come to report their names. I was on the point of

handing them over to you to use as you will when my tutor made a very sensible suggestion. Out of consideration for the great distance they have come and also to preserve good relations with the land of China I sent for them a moment ago and was just examining their papers when you three Teachers raised this question. Have they offended or harmed you?"

To this the Taoist replied with a smile, "What Your Majesty does not yet know is that they arrived yesterday, killed two of our disciples outside the East Gate, released the five hundred captive Buddhist monks, smashed our cart, broke into our temple at night, destroyed the statues of the Three Pure Ones, and stole their offerings.

We were so deceived by them that we though they were Heavenly Honoured Ones come down to earth and asked them for holy water and elixir pills to present to Your Majesty in the hope of securing eternal life for you. We never expected them to make fools of us by giving us urine. We each drank a mouthful to taste, but when we tried to capture them they escaped. If they are still here now it's a case of meeting your enemy on a narrow road." All this made the king so angry that he ordered the execution of the four monks.

The Great Sage Monkey put his hands together and began to yell at the top of his voice, "Please hold back your thunderous wrath for a moment, Your Majesty, and allow us Buddhist monks to make our submission."

"You have offended the Teachers of the Nation," the king replied, "and what they say is always right."

"He accuses me of coming here yesterday and killing two of his disciples," said Monkey. "What witnesses does he have? Even if we admitted the killing you need only execute two of us monks to pay for their lives and you could release the other two to fetch the scriptures. He doesn't have any witnesses either for his accusations that I smashed their cart and freed the captive monks. Even if I had done, that wouldn't be a capital offence. To punish one more of us would be enough. When he says I destroyed the statues of the Three Pure Ones and made havoc in the Taoist temple he's deliberately trying to frame and murder me."

"Why?" the king asked.

"We are all from the East," Monkey replied, "and have only just arrived here. We don't even know our way round the streets, so how could we possibly know what happened in his temple in the middle of the night? If we had given them some piss they should have arrested us on the spot. They shouldn't make up these terrible accusations now. There are any number of people in the world who give false names. He could not possibly tell that it was me. I hope Your Majesty will turn your wrath aside and have these charges properly investigated." The king had been wild with fury before, but now that he had heard what Monkey had to say he could not make up his mind.

As the king was wondering what to do the eunuch gate officer came in once more to report, "Your Majesty, there is a crowd of village elders outside the gates awaiting your summons."

"What do they want?" the king asked, and ordered them to be sent in.

Thirty or forty of them were brought before the throne hall, where they kowtowed to the king and said, "Your Majesty, there has been no rain this spring and we fear a drought this summer. We have come here to submit a request to Your Majesty that you invite the Teachers of the Nation to pray for timely rain that will save the common people."

"You may withdraw," said the king. "There will be rain." The elders thanked him for his mercy and withdrew.

"Tang monks," said the king, "do you know why we honour the Way and persecute Buddhist monks? When the Buddhist monks of this country prayed for rain some years ago they did not get a single drop. It was fortunate that Heaven sent down to us the Teachers of the Nation to bring help and deliverance. You have come from afar and offended the Teachers of the Nation, and you thoroughly deserve to be punished for it. If I spare you for the time being, will you enter a rainmaking competition with the Teachers of the Nation? If you can bring about a good fall of rain that saves the common people we shall pardon your crimes, return your paper, and let you go. If you fail you will all be taken to the place of execution and publicly executed."

"We humble monks know how to pray for things," said Monkey with a smile.

Hearing this, the king ordered that the altars be swept clean and sent for his carriage as he was going to watch the ritual from the Tower of

Five Phoenixes. The officials then moved him in his carriage to the tower, where he was soon seated. The Tang Priest stood at the foot of the tower with Monkey, Friar Sand and Pig, while the three Taoist masters sat with the king in the tower. Before long an official galloped in to report, "Everything is ready at the altar. Will the Teacher of the Nation please come to the altar?"

The Great Immortal Tiger Power bowed to take his leave of the king and descended from the tower. Brother Monkey blocked his way and said, "Where are you going, sir?"

"To the altar to pray for rain," the immortal replied.

"You're being too arrogant," said Monkey. "Why don't you show some courtesy to us monks from far away?

Oh well, 'a mighty dragon can't crush a snake in its lair.' You go first, but you'll have to explain to His Majesty."

"Explain what?" the Great Immortal asked.

"If we both pray for rain at the altar," Monkey replied, "how will we know whether it's your rain or mine? It'll be hard to tell who should get the credit." When the king heard this up on his tower he was discreetly delighted as he said, "That little monk talks sense."

Friar Sand too hid a smile as he thought, "The king doesn't realize that Monkey hasn't even started showing how much sense he has in him."

"No explanations will be needed," said the immortal. "Of course His Majesty will know whose the rain is."

"I'm sure he will," said Monkey, "but we monks from far away have never met you before. If later on both sides made false claims that would be terrible. We must have it all sorted out before we start."

"When I go to the altar," said the Great Immortal, "this magic wand of mine will give the signal. When it first sounds, the wind will come. The second time the clouds will rise. The third time it will bring thunder and lightning. The fourth time it will rain. The fifth time the

clouds will break up and the rain will finish."

"Splendid," said Monkey with a laugh. "I've never seen anything like that. Please go ahead."

The Great Immortal then strode straight to the gates of the altar compound followed by Sanzang and his disciples. They looked up to see a raised terrace over thirty feet high. To the left and right of it were planted banners bearing the sign of the twenty－eight zodiacal constellations, and clouds of fragrant smoke rose from an incense －burner on a table set at the highest point on the altar. At each end of the table was a candle－holder with candles burning brightly. Beside the incense－burner was a golden tablet inscribed with the titles of the gods of thunder, and below the burner were five great vats all filled with clean water. Sprigs of willow floated on them, and on the willow was an iron plaque bearing the talisman of the Commander of Thunder. To the left and right of these were five stout posts on which were written the names of the five barbarian thunder heralds.

By each post stood two Taoist priests ready to strike them with iron hammers. Behind the terrace many Taoist priests were writing things out, and in the middle of them was a stove for burning paper and some model figures representing the messengers who carried the charms and the local gods who supported the Taoist teachings.

The Great Immortal walked straight into the altar enclosure and without any show of modesty went straight up the altar mound and took his place. A young Taoist at his side handed him several yellow pieces of paper that had spells written on them and a precious sword. Holding the sword the Great Immortal recited a spell and burnt a spell on a candle. Two or three of the young Taoists standing below the altar mound passed him a model figure holding a spell and a written document, both of which he also lit and burnt. Then there was a loud report from the wand, and up in the sky the signs of a wind blowing up could be seen.

"This is bad," muttered Pig. "The Taoist really has got some powers. He just had to sound his wand once to make the wind blow."

"Keep quiet, brothers," said Monkey, "and don't say anything else to me. Look after the master while I get busy."

Chapter 45

The splendid Great Sage then plucked out one of his hairs, blew on it with magic breath, called "Change!" and turned it into an imitation Monkey who stood by the Tang Priest while his true self escaped, rose up into the air and shouted, "Who's in charge of the wind?" This threw Granny Wind into such a fluster that she held her cloth bag closed while Young Master Xun tied the string round the mouth. They both came forward and bowed to him.

"I'm protecting the holy priest from Tang on his journey to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures,"

Monkey said. "We're now having a rainmaking competition with an evil Taoist in the country of Tarrycart.

Why are you helping him instead of me? If you put your wind away I'll let you off, but if there's even enough wind to move a whisker in that Taoist's beard I'll give you twenty strokes each with my iron cudgel."

"We wouldn't dare help him," said Granny Wind, and the wind then stopped.

In his impatience Pig started to yell wildly, "Give up, give up. You've sounded your wand and there's not a breath of wind. Come down now and let us go up."

Once again the Taoist took his magic wand, burnt spells, and made a report with the wand. The sky filled with clouds.

"Who's spreading the clouds out?" the Great Sage asked up overhead. Boy Cloudpusher and Young Lord Mistspreader bowed to him. Once again Monkey explained what had happened; Cloudpusher and Mistspreader put the clouds away, and the sun shone brightly once more in a clear sky.

"This teacher has been fooling the king and hoodwinking the common people," laughed Pig. "He doesn't really have any powers at all. His wand has sounded for the second time, and there's not a cloud to be seen."

By now the Taoist was getting anxious. Leaning on his sword he let down his hair, said the words of a spell, and cracked his magic wand for the third time. From the Southern Gate of Heaven the Heavenly Lord Deng led Grandfather Thunder and Mother Lightning to bow to

Monkey in mid－air. Monkey told them what had happened and asked, "Why are you being so dutiful? What sort of orders are they you're obeying?"

"That Taoist really does know the Five Laws of Thunder," the Heavenly Lord Deng replied. "He issued the right document, burned the summons, and alarmed the Jade Emperor, who issued an edict to the offices of the Universal Honoured One of the Ninth Heaven Who Responds to the Primal with the Sound of Thunder. We are going on imperial orders to help Grandfather Thunder and Mother Lightning make rain."

"In that case you'd better stay where you are and let me sort things out," said Monkey; and indeed the thunder did not sound, nor did the lightning flash.

The Taoist was becoming more anxious than ever. He lit more incense －sticks, burnt charms, said incantations, and sounded his wand once more. The dragon kings of the four seas all gathered in mid－air. "Where are you going, Ao Guang?" Monkey asked. The four dragon kings Ao Guang, Ao Shun, Ao Qin and Ao Run came up and bowed to him.

He told them what had happened then said, "When I troubled you the other day you didn't succeed. I hope you will help me again today."

"We hear and obey," replied the dragon kings.

Monkey then thanked Ao Shun: "I am very grateful to your son for capturing the monster and saving my master the other day."

"That wretch is being kept in chains in the sea," the dragon king Ao Shun replied. "I have not ventured to deal with him on my own initiative, and I would like to ask you, Great Sage, to decide on his sentence."

"Deal with him however you think fit," replied Monkey. "Now I would like you to do me a good turn. That Taoist has now sounded his wand four times, so it's my turn to perform now. As I don't know how to use charms, burn talismans, or sound a magic wand I'll have to ask you

gentlemen to help me out."

"We would not dare disobey a command from the Great Sage," Heavenly Lord Deng replied. "But we can only act when proper orders are given. Otherwise the thunder and the rain will happen at the wrong times, and the Great Sage will lose his credibility."

"I'll give the signs with my cudgel," said Monkey, to the horror of Grandfather Thunder, who protested, "But my lord, none of us can take your cudgel."

"No," said Monkey, "I won't be hitting you with it. When I point up with it the first time I want wind."

"We'll let the wind out," promised Granny Wind and Young Master Xun.

"The second time I point up I want clouds."

"We'll spread out the clouds," said Cloudpusher and Mistspreader.

"The third time I point up with the cudgel I want thunder and lightning."

"We shall obey, we shall obey," said Grandfather Thunder and Mother Lightning.

"The fourth time I point up with the cudgel I want rain."

"Your orders will be carried out," the dragon kings replied.

"And the fifth time I point up with the cudgel I want the sun shining in a clear sky. I won't have any disobedience or mistakes."

Having given his orders Monkey brought his cloud down, shook his hair, and put it back on his body. None of those with mortal, fleshly eyes could see what had happened. Monkey then called out in a loud voice, "Please finish now, teacher. You have sounded your magic wand four times without producing any wind, clouds, thunder or rain. It's my turn now." The Taoist could stay at the altar no longer; he had to come down and allow Monkey to take his place while he went with a long face to climb the tower to see the king. "Wait while I go up with him and hear what he has to say," said Monkey.

He heard the king asking, "Why was there no wind or rain when you sounded your magic wand four times?

We are listening most carefully."

"The dragons are all out today," the Taoist replied.

"Your Majesty," yelled Monkey, "today the dragons are all in. It was just that the Teacher of the Nation's magic didn't work and he couldn't get them to come. Just watch how we Buddhist monks can make them come."

"Climb to the altar then," said the king. "We shall remain here and await rain."

Chapter 45

630

Journey to the West

As soon as he received this command Brother Monkey hurried to the altar compound, tugged at the Tang Priest's clothes, and said, "Master, please climb the altar mound."

"But I do not know how to pray for rain, disciple," said Sanzang.

"He's trying to murder you," said Pig. "If there's still no rain they'll bring firewood along and send you up in flames."

"You may not know how to pray for rain," said Monkey, "but you're good at reciting scriptures. I'll help you."

Only then did the venerable elder start to climb to the altar. When he reached the top he sat down with great dignity, settled his nature, brought his spirit under control, and quietly recited the *Prajna −paramita Heart Sutra.* As he sat there an official messenger galloped up to him to ask, "Monk, why aren't you sounding a magic wand or burning charms and summonses?"

"He doesn't need to," Monkey shouted back. "We pray in stillness and silence." The official returned to the king to report this reply.

When Monkey heard that his master had finished reciting the sutra he produced his cudgel from his ear, waved it in the breeze to make it about twelve feet long and as thick as a ricebowl, and pointed it towards the sky. As soon as Granny Wind saw it she opened her leather bag while Young Master Xun untied the rope round its mouth. There was then the howling of a wind that tore off tiles and sent

bricks flying throughout the city. It was evidently a splendid wind, not at all like ordinary ones: Willow were broken and flowers hurt,

Trees blown down in devastated woods.

The walls collapsed in halls of nine stories;

Beams and columns were shaken in the Five Phoenix Tower.

In the sky the red sun turned dark,

And the yellow dust of the earth began to fly.

The officers before the reviewing stand were scared;

Terror struck the civil officials in their hall.

The beauties of the harem had their hair blown untidy;

The royal consorts' coiffures were all ruined.

Tassels fell from the coronets of nobles;

The black silk hat of the premier took wing.

The king was too terrified to speak,

The eunuchs could not hand in their reports.

Senior officials stood in disorder,

High－level functionaries broke ranks.

Coloured pavilions and turquoise screens were ruined;

Green windows and crimson doors were wrecked.

Bricks and tiles flew from the throne hall;

In the Brocade Cloud Chamber doors leaned and partition were smashed.

Vicious indeed was this terrible gale,

Making hard for the king to see his sons,

And driving the people from streets and markets:

Every household firmly shut its doors.

Just as this gale was at its height Brother Monkey gave another display of his divine powers as he pointed his gold – banded cudgel up into the sky for the second time. What could then be seen was: The Boy Cloudpusher,

Young Lord Mistspreader.

The Boy Cloudpusher showed his divine magic,

Making great rocklike heaps that hung down from the sky;

Young Lord Mistspreader used his powers .

To cover the earth with thick, dense fog.

All was dark in the three markets;

Black were the six main streets of the city.

Leaving the sea together with the wind,

They appeared with the rain in the Kunlun Mountains,

Filled heaven and earth in an instant,

Immediately covered the mortal world.

All was reduced to obscurity

And the doors of the Five Phoenix Tower disappeared.

In an instant there was dense fog and thick clouds everywhere. Monkey then pointed his gold – banded cudgel into the air a third time, with alarming results:

Grandfather Thunder was angry,

Mother Lightning was furious.

Grandfather Thunder was angry

As he rode backwards on his fire beast down from Heaven;

Mother Lightning was furious

As she left her Dipper Palace lashing out with her golden snake.

The thunder crashed and roared,

Shaking the Iron Fork Mountain;

Brilliant flashes of red silk

Flew from the Eastern Ocean.

The noise rumbled like carts;

The flashes were like rice plants gleaming in the wind.

The spirit of all living shoots revived,

Many a sleeping insect came to life.

It terrified monarch and subject alike;

The sound made merchants nervously active.

The thunder roared with the noise of an earthquake or a landslide, so frightening the people in the city that they all burnt incense and imitation money. "Deng," shouted Monkey familiarly, "make sure that you kill me a few more corrupt officials who twist the laws and disobedient sons who do not do their duty to their parents as an example to the people." The thunder became louder than ever, and Monkey pointed his cudgel upwards for Chapter 45

the fourth time.

The dragons gave their orders

And ram filled Heaven and earth,

As if the river in the sky was filling the heavenly gulf,

And as fast as clouds passing over the ocean's gates.

It pattered on the roof of the tower,

Splashed against the windows.

Now that the river in the sky had flooded,

White waves rolled along the streets.

They moved around like a dish being picked up,

Splashed like water being tipped from a bowl.

The lonely farm's houses were almost covered by the flood,

Which was nearly as high as the bridge across the river.

The mulberry fields indeed were turning into sea,

And dry land was under water in an instant.

This was the help the dragons gave,

As they lifted the Yangtse and poured the water down.

The rain started at about eight in the morning and lasted till around noon, by when all the streets inside and outside the capital of Tarrycart were running with water. The king then issued a command: "Enough rain has fallen now. If there is any more the growing crops will be drowned and it will be a disaster."

The officer on duty at the foot of the Tower of Five Phoenixes whipped his horse and rode through the rain to say, "Holy monk, that is enough rain." Hearing this, Monkey pointed his gold–banded cudgel towards the sky again, and at once the thunder stopped, the wind fell, the rain ceased and the clouds scattered.

The king was delighted, and all the civil and military officials said in admiration, "What a marvellous monk.

How true it is that however good you are at something there's always somebody better. Our Teachers of the Nation are very effective at

making rain, but when they ask for fine weather the drizzle goes on for hours before clearing up. However can this monk make the skies clear the moment he gives the word, so that the sun shines bright on the instant and there isn't a cloud to be seen for miles around?"

The king ordered that his carriage be taken back to the court, where he would return the Tang Priest's passport with an exit permit and allow him to go. Just when he was placing the royal seal on the document the three Taoists came in to stop him, saying, "Your Majesty, that rain was caused not by the monk but by our efforts."

"But you told me earlier that it did not rain because the dragon kings were not at home," said the king. "When the Buddhist monk went up to the altar and prayed in stillness and silence the rain came. How can you possibly try to take the credit from him?"

"When I went to the altar, burnt the charms and summonses and sounded my magic wand," the Great Immortal Tiger Power said, "the dragon kings would not have dared stay away. No doubt they had been called elsewhere, which was why the authorities in charge of wind, cloud, thunder and rain were all out. When they heard my order they hurried here, which happened to be just when I was coming down from the altar and he was going up to it. It was a coincidence that it rained then. Essentially it was I who summoned the dragons and made it rain. The credit can't possibly go to him." In his confusion the king took this suggestion seriously and was once again unable to make up his mind.

Monkey took a step forward, put his hands together in front of his chest, and said, "Your Majesty, these heterodox magic tricks achieved nothing; the credit is neither his nor mine. But the dragon kings of the four seas are still in the sky here. I haven't sent them away, and they wouldn't dare leave on their own initiative. If the Teacher of the Nation can make the dragon kings appear he can take the credit."

This delighted the king, who said, "In the twenty–three years we have been on the throne we have never seen what a live dragon looks like. You must both display your magic powers. Whoever can make them come, be he Taoist or Buddhist, will have the credit; and whoever fails will be punished."

Of course that Taoists did not have the power. In the presence of the Great Sage the dragon kings would not have dared show their faces in response to a call from the Taoists. "We cannot do it," said the Taoists. "You summon them."

The Great Sage looked up to the sky and yelled at the top of his voice, "Where are you, Ao Guang? You and your brothers must show yourselves to me in your true forms." On hearing this summons the dragon kings soon appeared in their true forms; writhing through the mist and clouds in the sky they danced through the air to the throne hall. This was what could be seen:

Flying transformations,

Coiling through the clouds.

Their jade claws hung like white hooks,

Their silver scales danced with the brightness of mirrors.

Vigor was in every strand of their floating white beards;

And their horns rose proud and full of purity.

Lofty were their foreheads,

Bright shone their round, round eyes.

None can predict their appearance;

Their flight is beyond appraisal.

But when the rain was prayed for, it fell,

And the skies cleared as soon as requested.

These were holy and magical dragons,

Surrounding the palace with numinous radiance.

The king burnt incense in his palace hall and the ministers bowed low

in worship before the steps. "Now that your noble selves have granted us your presence we need detain you no longer," said the king. "We shall have a thanksgiving mass said another day."

"All you gods may now go too," said Monkey. "The king will have a thanksgiving mass said another day."

The dragon kings went straight back to their oceans, and the gods all returned to Heaven. Indeed: Great and boundless is the wonderful Dharma;

False faiths are smashed when its truth is revealed.

If you don't know how evil was eliminated, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 46

False Faith Oppresses the True Dharma

The Sage Mind—Ape Eliminates Evil

The story tells how when the king saw that Monkey had the power to summon dragons and order gods about he put his seal on the passports and handed them to the Tang Priest, whom he allowed to continue on his journey West. The three Taoist masters were so terrified that they prostrated themselves in the Hall of Golden Bells and submitted a memorial to the king, who came down from his dragon throne, helped them to their feet with his own hand, and said, "Why are you performing this obeisance to me today?"

"Your Majesty," the Taoists replied, "we came here to help the country, protect the state and look after the people. We have toiled here for twenty years but now these Buddhist monks have put themselves ahead of us and ruined our reputation with a magic trick. Are you not insulting us by letting them off their death sentences just because of some rain? We implore you to keep their papers and allow us three brothers to challenge them to another competition. What do you think?"

The king of Tarrycart really was muddle—headed: when he heard advice from the East he inclined to the East, Chapter 46

and when he was advised from the West he inclined to the West. "What sort of competition with them do you propose, Teachers of the Nation?" he asked.

"We would like to compete with them in sitting in meditation," said the Great Immortal Tiger Power.

"The Teacher of the Nation must have made a mistake," the king replied. "That monk comes from a sect that practices *dhyana* meditation. He must have mastered the art of meditation before his emperor sent him to fetch scriptures. Why would you want to compete with him at that?"

"The way we sit in meditation," the Great Immortal replied, "is not the ordinary way. It has a special name:

'revealing one's holiness on a cloud ladder'"

"What does that mean?" the king asked.

"A hundred tables are needed," said the Great Immortal. "Fifty of them are piled one on top of each other to make the meditation platform. Once must mount it not by using one's hands or a ladder, but by riding a cloud to take one's seat on it and sit motionless for the agreed number of hours."

Realizing that this was rather difficult he asked this question: "Monks, the Teacher of the Nation would like to compete with you in a way of sitting in meditation called 'revealing one's holiness on a cloud ladder'. Can any of you do that?" When Monkey heard this he kept silent and did not reply.

"Brother," asked Pig, "why aren't you saying anything?"

"I'll be honest with you," Monkey replied. "I can manage all sorts of tricks like kicking the sky into a well, stirring up the sea, turning rivers upside down, lifting mountains, chasing the moon away, and moving stars and constellations around. I'm not afraid of having my head chopped off, my brains sliced up, my entrails laid open, my heart cut out and being shifted about in other ways like that. But when it comes to sitting in meditation I'm beaten. I'm not a sitter by nature. Even if you chained me to an iron column I'd want to wriggle up and down. I'd never want to sit still."

Then Sanzang cut in with, "I can sit in meditation."

"That's splendid," said Monkey with delight, "splendid. But how long can you do it for?"

"When I was young," Sanzang replied, "a monk of the Chan sect who came to my monastery taught the way of fastening one's being to the root, settling the nature, and fixing the spirit while on the boundary of life and death. I can sit for two or three years."

"If you're going to sit there for two or three years, Master," said Monkey, "we can give up the idea of going to fetch the scriptures. You won't need to sit there for more than a few hours before coming down."

"But I can't get up there, disciple," Sanzang protested.

"Go forward and accept the challenge," said Monkey. "I'll get you up there."

The venerable elder put his hands together in front of his chest and said, "This humble monk can sit in meditation." The king then ordered that the meditation platforms be built. The state had the resources to tear down mountains, and in less than an hour the two meditation platforms had been built, one to each side of the throne hall.

The Great Immortal Tiger Power then went down from the hall, stood in the middle of the steps, sprang into the air and went straight up on a cloud to the Western platform and set down. Monkey plucked out one of his hairs and turned it into a double of himself that stood below with Pig and Friar Sand while he made his real self into a coloured auspicious cloud that lifted the Tang Priest up through the air to take his seat on the Eastern platform.

Then he put the cloud away, turned into the tiniest of insects, flow into Pig's ear, and said, "Brother, keep a very close eye on the master and don't talk to my double."

"I understand, I understand," replied the idiot with a grin.

The Great Immortal Deer Power had been sitting on his embroidered cushion for a very long time watching the two of them sitting on their

high platforms without either emerging as the winner. He decided to help his elder brother, so he plucked a hair from the back of his head, rolled it into a ball, and flicked it straight at the Tang Priest's head, where it turned into a huge bedbug that started biting the venerable elder. Sanzang first itched and then was in pain. When sitting in meditation movements of the hand are forbidden; if he moved his hand he would lose. The agony was soon unbearable, and he pulled his head down to scratch it against his collar.

"This is bad," said Monkey. "The master's being driven mad by epilepsy."

"No," said Friar Sand, "it's a migraine."

When Monkey heard this he said, "Our master is sincere and a gentleman. If he says he can sit in meditation he most certainly can. Gentlemen don't lie. You two shut up while I go up there for a look." The splendid Monkey then flew with a buzz straight up to the Tang Priest's head, where he saw a bedbug the size of a bean biting the master. He immediately picked it off him then scratched and rubbed his head for him, so that the venerable elder did not itch or ache any more and sat up straight again.

"Monks have bald heads," thought Brother Monkey, "and not even a louse could settle on one, let alone a bedbug. I think it must have been a trick by those Taoists to get the master killed. Hunh! Well, they haven't won yet, despite their cheating. I'll try a trick on them." Monkey then flew up and landed on the head of one of the ceramic animals on the roof of the palace hall. He shook himself and turned into a poisonous centipede seven inches long that went straight for the Taoist and stung him in the nose. The Taoist could sit still no longer, and tumbling head over heels he fell off the platform and would probably have died had not the senior and junior officials saved him. The horrified king sent the royal tutor to take the Taoist to the Hall of Literary Splendor to comb his hair and clean himself up; meanwhile Monkey went up on his auspicious cloud to carry his victorious master down to before the steps of the throne hall.

The king ordered that Sanzang be allowed to leave the country, but the Great Immortal Deer Power made this submission: "Your Majesty, my elder brother has long suffered from rheumatism. The heavenly wind in that high place brought on a new attack of his illness, which was why the Buddhist monk won. Please keep him here so that I can compete with him at guessing objects through wooden boards?"

"What is guessing objects through wooden boards?" the king asked.

"This humble Taoist has the power of knowing what is on the other side of a board," Deer Power replied, "and I would like to see whether that Buddhist monk can too. If he is better at guessing than I am, let him go. But if he is not then I hope Your Majesty will decide what crime he is guilty of, avenge us brothers, and not allow our twenty years of protecting the country to be sullied."

Chapter 46

The king was so utterly muddle-headed that he accepted this malicious suggestion and ordered that a red lacquered chest be carried by the eunuchs of the royal household into the harem, where his queen was told to put one of her treasures inside. The chest was carried out and set in front of the steps of the throne hall a few moments later. "Your two faiths must each compete with your magical powers in guessing what treasure is in the chest," he told the Buddhist and the Taoist.

"Disciple," asked Sanzang, "how can I tell what is inside?"

Monkey put his cloud away, turned himself back into the smallest of insects, landed on Sanzang's face and said, "Don't worry, master. I'll go and take a look." The splendid Great Sage flew over to the chest, crawled under its legs, and saw a crack between the boards through which he squeezed inside. Here he saw a red lacquer tray in which was placed a set of court robes: a mountain, river and state jacket and a heaven, earth and land skirt. He picked them up, shook and crumpled them, bit the tip of his tongue, sprayed a mouthful of blood over them, called "Change!" and turned them into a worn-out cloak into which he pissed before crawling out through the crack between the boards. He then flew back to the Tang Priest's ear and said,

"Master, say that it's a worn-out cloak."

"But he told me to guess what treasure is inside," said the Tang Priest. "What sort of treasure is an old cloak?"

"Never mind about that," said Monkey. "Just make that guess." The Tang Priest stepped forward and was just about to state his guess when Deer Power said, "I shall make the first guess. The chest contains

a mountain, river and state jacket and a heaven, earth and land skirt."

"No," said the Tang Priest, "it does not. The chest contains a rotten cloak."

"That monk is being outrageous," said the king. "He has the effrontery to suggest that our country has no treasures by guessing that it contains a tattered old cloak. Execute him!"

The two groups of guards officers were just about to fall upon the Tang Priest when he called out desperately,

"Your Majesty, spare me for a moment while the chest is opened for you to look inside. If there really is a treasure there I shall accept my punishment; but if there is not you would be doing me an injustice." The king then ordered that the chest be opened, and when the officials in attendance on him opened it and lifted out the red tray he saw that there really was a putrid old cloak on it.

"Who put that there?" asked the king in a great fury.

The queen then slipped forward from behind the dragon throne to say, "My lord, I put the mountain, river and state jacket and the heaven, earth and land skirt inside myself. I don't know how they can have turned into that."

"You may retire, good wife," said the king. "I believe you. All the things used in the harem are of the finest silks and gauzes. We would never have anything like that." He then ordered that the chest be carried up to him so that he could put a treasure inside it himself for another test.

The king then went into the harem, picked a peach as big as a bowl from the magic peach tree in the palace gardens, placed it in the chest and had it carried down for the two of them to guess what it was.

"Disciple," said the Tang Priest, "I have to guess again."

"Don't worry," said Monkey, "I'll take another look." Once more he buzzed over, went in through the same crack, and saw a peach that was just to his liking. He turned back into himself and ate the peach clean up as he Chapter 46

sat in the chest, nibbling every single piece of it, including the damaged parts of the skin, and leaving the stone there when he turned back into the tiniest of insects and flew back to land on Sanzang's ear. "Master," he said, "guess that it's a peach stone."

"Don't make a fool of me, disciple," said Sanzang. "If I hadn't spoken up fast just now I would have been executed. This time I must guess that it is something precious, and there is nothing precious about a peach stone."

"Don't be afraid," said Monkey. "All that matters is winning."

Before Sanzang could speak the Great Immortal Antelope Power said, "I shall make the first guess. It is a magic peach."

"It is not a peach, only a peach stone," said Sanzang.

"But we put the peach in there ourself," said the king. "It could not possibly be only a stone. The Third Teacher of the Nation is right."

"Your Majesty," put in Sanzang, "open the chest up and look."

Once more the officials in attendance carried the chest up to be opened, lifted out the dish, and revealed only a stone with no skin or flesh, a sight that shocked the king.

"Teachers of the Nation," he said, "stop competing with him and let him go. We put the magic peach in there with our own hands. If there is only a stone there now, who can have eaten it? He must have gods or demons helping him in secret."

When Pig heard this he said to Friar Sand with a touch of a sarcastic grin, "The king doesn't realize that Monkey is an expert when it comes to eating peaches."

As he was saying this the Great Immortal Tiger Power came back into the throne hall after combing his hair and washing himself in the Hall of Literary Splendor. "Your Majesty," he said, "this monk has the art of shifting and changing things. Have the chest brought up here. I will break his magic and have another divination contest with him."

"What do you want to guess now?" the king asked.

"Magic can change only things, not people," said Tiger Power. "Hide this boy Taoist in the chest, and I guarantee that the monk will not be able to change him." The boy got inside, the lid was put on, and the

chest carried down.

"Guess what treasure is inside it this third time, monk," the king said.

"Again!" exclaimed Sanzang, to which Monkey replied, "Wait while I take another look." Once more he buzzed over and squeezed inside, this time to find a little boy inside.

Splendid Monkey knew what to do. How true it is that few in the world can do improvised transformations, and hardly any as skillfully as he. He shook himself, turned into the exact image of the old Taoist, went into the chest and said "Disciple."

"Where have you come from, master?" the boy asked him.

"I came by disappearing magic," Monkey replied.

"What instructions do you have for me?" the boy asked.

"The Buddhist monk saw you getting into the chest," said Monkey, "and if he says that there's a young Taoist in here we'll have lost. I've come here to work out a plan with you. We'll shave your head and guess that you're a Buddhist monk."

"Do whatever you decide, master," said the boy, "as long as we win. If we lose to him again our reputation will be ruined and the king will have no more respect for us."

"You are right," said Monkey. "Come here, my boy, and if we win I'll reward you richly." He then turned his gold–banded cudgel into a razor, put his arms firmly round the boy, and said, "Put up with the pain, there's a good boy, and don't make a sound while I shave your head." In an instant he had shaved off the boy's hair, which he stuffed into a ball and hid in a corner of the chest. Then he put the razor away and stroked the boy's shaven pate saying, "Your head looks like a Buddhist monk's now, my boy, but your clothes are wrong. Take them off and I'll transform them for you."

The boy took off his greenish–white cloud–patterned crane cloak with embroidered brocade hems. Monkey blew on it with a magic

breath, called "Change!" and turned it into a brown Buddhist monk's habit for the boy to put on. Monkey pulled out two more hairs and turned them into a wooden fish that he gave to the boy saying, "Listen carefully, disciple. Whatever happens don't come out when you hear a call of 'Taoist boy'. But when you hear someone say 'Buddhist monk,' lift the lid of the chest with your head, strike the wooden fish, and come out reciting a Buddhist surra. Do that and we will win."

"But I can only recite the *Classic of the Three Officials, the Classic of the Dipper,* and the *Classic of Elimination of Disaster,"* said the boy, "I don't know any Buddhist scriptures."

"Can you recite the name of a Buddha?" asked Monkey. "Anyone can recite 'Amitabha Buddha,'" the boy replied.

"That'll have to do then," said Monkey. "Recite the Buddha's name and save me the trouble of having to teach you a sutra. Remember what I've told you as I'm going now." Monkey then turned back into the tiniest of insects, squeezed out, flew back to beside the Tang Priest's ear, and said, "Master, say that there's a Buddhist monk inside."

"This time we are certain to win," replied Sanzang.

"How can you be so sure?" Monkey asked.

"The sutras teach us that there are three treasures," said Sanzang, "the Buddha, the Dharma and the Clergy; so a monk must count as a treasure."

As Sanzang was saying this the Great Immortal Tiger Power said, "Your Majesty, this third time there is a Taoist boy inside." Tiger Power called and called but the boy would not come out. Sanzang then put his hands together and said, "There is a monk inside."

"There's a monk inside the chest," shouted Pig at the top of his voice, at which the boy raised the lid of the chest with his head and stepped out, beating his wooden fish and repeating the name of the Buddha. The civil and military officials were so delighted that they all cheered; while the terrified Taoists were at a loss for words.

"This monk is being helped by gods and demons," said the king. "How else could he have got into the chest as a Taoist boy and stepped out as a Buddhist monk? Even if a barber had got in with him he could only have shaved his head; but he's wearing a well–fitting habit and repeating the Buddha's name too. Teachers of the Nation, you must let those monks go."

To this the Great Immortal Tiger Power replied, "Your Majesty, this is a case of a chess–player meeting his match, or a general coming up against a master strategist. We would like to try the martial arts we learned as boys in the Zhongnan Mountains against him."

"What martial arts?" the king asked.

"We three brothers all have some divine powers," Tiger Power replied. "We can put our head back on when they have been cut off; open up our chests, cut out our hearts, and make ourselves whole again; and take a bath in boiling oil."

"But those are all certain death," exclaimed the king in horror. "We have these powers," said Tiger Power,

"which is why I can give you a clear undertaking that we will not give up until we have been allowed a tournament with him."

Monkey had just turned himself back into the tiniest of insects and gone over to investigate when he heard all this. Reverting to his real form he roared with laughter and said, "What luck, what marvellous luck. Business has brought itself to my front door."

"But those are all ways of getting yourself killed," said Pig. "How can you talk about business coming to your front door?"

"You still don't know my powers," said Monkey.

"But all the transformations you can do are more than enough," said Pig. "You can't have powers like that too."

To this Monkey said,

"Cut off my head and I'll still go on talking,

Lop off my arms and I'll sock you another.

Chop off my legs and I'll carry on walking,

Carve up my guts and I'll put them together.

"When anyone makes a meat dumpling

I take it and down it in one.

To bath in hot oil is really quite nice,

A warm tub that makes all the dirt gone."

Chapter 46

642

Journey to the West

When Pig and Friar Sand heard this they roared with laughter. Monkey then stepped forward and said, "Your Majesty, this humble monk can be beheaded."

"What do you mean, you can be beheaded?" the king asked.

"When I was cultivating my conduct in the monastery many years ago," Monkey replied, "a dhyana monk who came there taught me a method of being beheaded. I don't know if it's any good, and I'd like to try it out today."

"That monk is too young to have any sense," said the king with a smile. "Having your head cut off isn't something that you can try out for I fun. Your head is the chief of the Six Positives, and when it's cut off you're dead."

"Your Majesty," said the Great Immortal Tiger Power, "this is just the way I want him to act so that we can get our revenge on him." Believing him, the foolish monarch ordered that a place for public execution be prepared.

As soon as the order was given, three thousand men of the royal guard were drawn up outside the palace gates. "The monk shall be beheaded first," said the king. Monkey cheerfully agreed: "I'll go first, I'll go first."

Then he put his hands together and shouted, "Teacher of the Nation, I hope you'll forgive my effrontery in going first." Monkey then turned round and went outside.

"Be careful, disciple," said Sanzang, catching hold of him as he passed, "this is no place for fooling about."

"What's there to be afraid of?" said Monkey. "Stop holding me; let me go."

The Great Sage went straight to the execution ground, where the executioners grabbed him and tied him up so that he was like a ball. When he was placed high on the earthen mound a shout of "Behead him!" was heard, and his head was cut off as the sword whistled down. The executioners then kicked it and sent it rolling thirty or forty paces away like a ripe watermelon. No blood came from Monkey's throat as a shout of "Come here, head" rose from his stomach.

The Great Immortal Tiger Power was so appalled by this display of magical skill that he said a spell and ordered the local deity, "Hold on to that head. When I've beaten this monk I shall request His Majesty to rebuild your little shrine as a big temple and replace your clay statue with a gold one." Now the local deity was under Tiger Power's control because Tiger Power had the five – thunder magic, so he held Monkey's head down.

"Come here, head," Monkey called again, but his head was no more able to move than if it had taken root there. Monkey was now feeling anxious, so he made a spell with his hands, burst out of the ropes that were binding him, and shouted, "Grow!" In a flash another head grew on his neck, so terrifying the executioners and the soldiers of the guard army that they all shivered and shook.

The officer supervising the executions rushed into the palace to report, "Your Majesty, when the little monk's head was cut off he grew another one."

"So that's another trick our brother can do," said Pig to Friar Sand with a mocking laugh.

Chapter 46

"As he can do seventy – two transformations," said Friar Sand, "he has seventy – two heads."

Before he had finished saying this Monkey came back and called, "Master!"

"Was it painful, disciple?" asked a greatly relieved Sanzang.

"No, it wasn't painful," said Monkey, "it was fun."

"Brother," asked Pig, "do you need sword – wound ointment?"

"Feel if there is a scar," said Monkey.

The idiot put out his hand and said with a smile of wide – eyed astonishment, "Fantastic. It's completely whole – – there's not even a scar."

While the brother – disciples were congratulating each other they heard the king calling on them to take their passport and saying, "We grant you a full pardon. Go at once."

"We accept the passport, but we insist that the Teacher of the Nation must be beheaded too to see what happens," said Monkey.

"Senior Teacher of the Nation," said the king, "that monk's not going to let you off. You promised to beat him, and don't give me another fright this time." Tiger Power then had to take his turn to go to be tied up like a ball by the executioners and have his head cut off with a flash of the blade and sent rolling over thirty paces when it was kicked away.

No blood came from his throat either, and he too called out, "Come here, head."

Monkey instantly pulled out a hair, blew a magic breath on it, said, "Change!" and turned it into a brown dog that ran across the execution ground, picking the Taoist's head up with its teeth and dropping it into the palace moat.

The Taoist shouted three times but did not get his head to come back. As he did not have Monkey's art of growing a new one the red blood started to gush noisily from his neck.

No use were his powers to call up wind and rain;

He could not compete with the true immortal again.

A moment later his body collapsed into the dust, and everyone could see that he was really a headless yellow – haired tiger

The officer supervising the executions then came to report, "Your Majesty, the Senior Teacher of the Nation has had his head cut off and

cannot grow a new one. He is lying dead in the dust and is now a headless yellow-haired tiger." This announcement made the king turn pale with shock. He stared at the other two Taoist masters, his eyes not moving.

Deer Power then rose to his feet and said, "My elder brother's life is now over, but he was no tiger. That monk in his wickedness must have used some deception magic to turn my elder brother into a beast. I will never forgive him for this, and am resolved to compete with him in opening the stomach and cutting out the heart."

When the king heard this he pulled himself together and said, "Little monk, the Second Teacher of the Nation wants another competition with you."

"I hadn't had a cooked meal for ages," said Monkey, "until the other day I was given a meal at a vegetarian's house on our journey West. I ate rather a lot of steamed bread, and my stomach has been aching recently. I think I must have worms, so I'd be glad to borrow Your Majesty's sword, cut my stomach open, take out my innards, and give my spleen and my stomach a good clean-out before going to the Western Heaven."

When the king heard this he said, "Take him to the place of execution." A whole crowd of people fell upon Monkey, took hold of him, and began dragging him there. Monkey pulled his hands free and said, "No need to grab hold of me. I can walk there myself. There's just one condition: my hands mustn't be tied up as I will need them to wash my innards." The king then ordered that his hands be left free.

Monkey walked with a swagger straight to the execution ground, where he leant against the stake, undid his clothes, and exposed his stomach. The executioners tied ropes round his neck and his legs, then made a quick cut in his stomach with a knife shaped like a cow's ear. This made a hole into which Monkey thrust both his hands to open it further as he brought out his entrails. He spent a long time checking them over carefully before putting them all back inside. Then he bent over again, pinched the skin of his stomach together, breathed a magic breath on it, called out, "Grow!" and made it join up again.

The king was so shocked that he gave Monkey the passport with his own hands, saying, "Here is your passport. Please don't let me delay you holy monks on your journey West any longer."

"Never mind the passport," said Monkey, "but what about asking the Second Teacher of the Nation to be cut open?"

"This is nothing to do with me," the king said to Deer Power.

"You wanted a match with him, and now you must go ahead."

"Don't worry," said Deer Power. "I cannot possibly lose to him."

Watch him as he swaggers like the Great Sage Monkey to the execution ground to be tied up by the executioners and have his stomach cut open with a whistle of the cow's–ear knife. He too took out his entrails and sorted them out with his own hands. Monkey meanwhile pulled out one of his hairs, blew on it with a magic breath, shouted, "Change!" and turned it into a hungry eagle that spread its wings, stretched out its claws, swooped down, grabbed the Taoist's internal organs, heart, liver and all, and flew off nobody knew where to devour them. The Taoist was

Left as an empty, eviscerated ghost,

With no entrails or stomach as he wanders around lost.

Chapter 46

645

Journey to the West

The executioners kicked the wooden stake down and dragged the body over to look at it. To their surprise they found it was that of a white–haired deer.

The officer supervising the executions came to make another shocked report: "The Second Teacher of the Nation has met with disaster. He died when his stomach was cut open and a hungry eagle carried off all his entrails and internal organs in its claws. He turns out to have been a white–haired deer."

"How could he have been a deer?" asked the king in terror. To this the Great Immortal Antelope Power submitted the following reply: "How could my elder brother possibly look like an animal after his death?

This is all the result of that monk using magic to ruin us. Let me avenge my elder brother."

"What magic arts do you have at which you might beat him?" the king asked. "I will compete with him at bathing in boiling oil," Antelope Power replied. The king then ordered that a great cauldron be brought out and filled with sesame oil for the two of them to have their competition.

"I'm most grateful for your consideration," said Monkey. "I haven't had a bath for a very long time, and these last couple of days my skin has begun to itch. I need a good, hot soak."

The officials in attendance on the king then set the cauldron of oil in position, built up a pile of dry firewood, set it burning fiercely, and heated the oil till it boiled and bubbled. Monkey was told to go in first. He put his hands together in front of his chest and said, "Is it to be a gentle bath or a rough one?" When the king asked him what they were, Monkey replied, "For a gentle bath you keep your clothes on, stretch your hands wide out, do a roll and come up again without getting your clothes at all dirty. If there is even a spot of oil on them you have lost. For a rough bath you need a clothes rack and a wash towel. You take your clothes off, jump in and somersault or do dragonfly – stands as you play around and wash yourself."

"Do you want to compete with him at gentle baths or rough ones?" the king asked Antelope Power. "If it is gentle baths," said Antelope Power, "he might have treated his clothes with some drug that will keep the oil off. Let it be rough baths then." Monkey then stepped forward and said, "Excuse my impertinence in always going first." Watch him while he takes off his tunic and tigerskin kilt, jumps into the cauldron, and dives through the waves, enjoying himself as much as if he were swimming in water.

At the sight of this Pig bit his finger and said to Friar Sand, "We've underestimated that Monkey. I usually say nasty things about him as if he just liked fooling about. I never realized he had powers like this."

When Monkey saw the two of them whispering his praises to each other, he thought suspiciously, "The idiot's mocking me again. How true it is that the clever have to do all the work and the clumsy stay idle. Here's me leaping around like this while he's standing there at his ease. Right, then. I'll get him tied up in knots and give him a real scare." In the middle of washing himself he made a great splash and plunged down to the bottom of the cauldron where he turned himself

into a jujube stone. He did not come up again.

The officer supervising the executions went up to the king and reported, "Your Majesty, the little monk has been fried to death in the boiling oil." The king in his delight ordered that the bones be fished out for him to see. The executioners fetched an iron strainer on a long handle with which they fished around in the cauldron, but its mesh was so coarse that Monkey, who was now as small as a nail, kept slipping through the holes in it and they could not fish him out. They then reported that the monk was so small and his bones so soft that they had been fried right away.

"Arrest the three monks," the king ordered. The guard officers in attendance grabbed Pig first as he looked dangerous, pushed him down, and tied him up with his hands behind his back. Sanzang was so terrified that he shouted, "Your Majesty, grand this poor monk a couple of hours' reprieve. My disciple achieved countless Chapter 46

good deeds after he was converted. Today he has died in the cauldron of boiling oil because he offended Your Majesty. Those who die first become gods, and I am not greedy to stay alive. Indeed, those in authority in the world look after the world's people. If Your Majesty tell me to die, your subject will not dare disobey. I only ask you in your mercy to grant me a bowl of cold gruel and three paper horses that I can place in front of the cauldron. I would like to burn the paper as a mark of my feeling for my disciple, and I will then be ready to go to my execution."

"Very well," said the King. "What a fine sense of honour these Chinese have." He then ordered that some gruel and yellow paper be given to the Tang Priest, which was done.

Sanzang told Friar Sand to come with him as the two of them went to the foot of the steps while several guard officers dragged Pig by his ears to the cauldron. Sanzang said this invocation before the cauldron: "Disciple Sun Wukong,

Since being ordained and then joining our order

You cared for and guarded me travelling West.

We hoped to complete our great journey together.

Who would have thought you would here to go rest?

Your life's only aim was collecting the scriptures,

And even when dead on the Buddha you ponder.

Now far, far away you true spirit is waiting;

As a ghost will you climb to the temple of Thunder."

"Master," said Pig when he heard this, "there's no need for an invocation like that. Friar Sand, fetch me some gruel and I'll make an invocation." Then the idiot said, snorting with anger as he lay tied up on the ground,

"Trouble – making monkey,

Ignorant Protector of the Horses.

The monkey deserved to die,

The Protector had to fry.

The Monkey found it too hot,

The Protector's had his lot."

Chapter 46

647

Journey to the West

When Monkey at the bottom of the cauldron heard the idiot abusing him like that he could not restrain himself from turning back into himself, standing up in the cauldron, and saying, "Dreg – guzzling moron! Who do you think you're swearing at?"

"Disciple," said Sanzang on seeing him, "you gave me a terrible fright."

"Big Brother's used to shamming dead," said Friar Sand. The civil and military officials were thrown into such a panic that they went forward to report to the king.

"Your Majesty, the monk did not die. He has just stood up in the cauldron." The officer supervising the executions was afraid that he would be in trouble for having earlier made a false report to the king,

so he submitted a new one: "The monk did die, but as this is an ill-omened day he has come back as a ghost to haunt us."

This made Monkey so angry that he sprang out of the cauldron, wiped the oil off himself, put on his clothes, pulled out his cudgel, and hit the supervisor of the executions so hard that his head turned to a meatball. "A ghost, indeed," he said, giving the officers such a fright that they untied Pig, fell to their knees, and pleaded,

"Forgive us, forgive us." As the king came down from his dragon throne Monkey went into the hall, seized hold of him, and said, "Don't go, Your Majesty. Make the Third Teacher of the Nation get into the cauldron of oil now."

"Third Teacher of the Nation," said the king with much trembling, "you must get into the cauldron at once to save my life.

"Don't let the monk hit me." Antelope Power then went down from the throne hall and like Monkey took off his clothes, jumped into the oil, and went through the motions of washing himself.

Monkey let the king go, went up to the cauldron, and told those tending the fire to add more fuel. Then he put out his hand to feel and found to his astonishment that the bubbling oil was icy cold.

"It was boiling hot when I had my bath," he thought, "but it's cold for his. I'm sure that one of the dragon kings must be protecting him." He leap straight up into midair, said the magic word *"Om,"* and summoned the Dragon King of the Northern Ocean.

"I'll get you, you horned worm, you loach with scales on," said Monkey. "How dare you help the Taoist by protecting the bottom of the cauldron as a cold dragon and letting him beat me in this display of divine powers!"

The dragon king was so frightened that he kept making respectful noises as he replied, "I'd never have dared help him. There is more to this than you realize, Great Sage. That evil beast has strenuously cultivated his conduct, shaken off his original shell, and has only really kept his five-thunder magic. In all other respects he has taken the path of heresy and could never return to the true Way. This is the 'Great Opening-up' that he learned on Lesser Mount Mao. The other two have already had their powers defeated by you, Great Sage, and reverted to their true appearances. The cold dragon this one uses is one that he created for himself, but it is only a trick with which to fool common mortals: it could not deceive you, Great Sage. I shall now

take that cold dragon under my control, and guarantee that his skin and bones will now be fried to a crisp."

"Hurry up about it if you don't want a beating," said Monkey, at which the dragon king changed into a fierce gust of wind that seized the cold dragon and carried it off to the sea.

Chapter 46

Monkey now came down to earth and stood beside Sanzang, Pig and Friar Sand in front of the throne hall watching the Taoist struggling without success to climb out of the boiling oil. Then the Taoist slipped back into the cauldron, and in an instant his bones came apart as his skin was fried crisp and his flesh cooked tender.

The official supervising the executions came in again to report, "Your Majesty, the Third Teacher of the Nation has been deep – fried to death." The tears gushed from the king's eyes as he struck the table by the throne and cried aloud,

"Hard is the gaining of life and hard is its end;

Elixir never refine without true instruction.

Vainly the spirits are raced and water – spells made;

Pills that can make you immortal are only a fiction.

Nirvana can never be won by a mind in disorder;

Cunning is useless when all it can cause is destruction.

Had I been warned that all could so easily fail,

I'd have kept to the diet and chosen a life of inaction."

Indeed:

There was no use in the golden touch and in making elixir;

Calling up wind and summoning rain all ended in failure.

If you do not know how the master and his disciples continued, listen

to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 47

The Holy Monk Is Stopped by the River of Heaven at Night

Metal and Wood in Their Mercy Rescue a Child

The king collapsed on his throne in tears and cried till nightfall. Then Monkey stepped forward and called out,

"Don't be so silly. Look at those Taoists' bodies. One was a tiger and the other was a deer. Antelope Power Chapter 47

was an antelope. If you don't believe me, have his bones fished out and take a look at them. Is that a human skeleton? They were all mountain beasts who became spirits and came here to destroy you. The only reason they had not struck yet was because your life force is still strong; but in another couple of years when your life force was weaker they would have murdered you and your whole kingdom would have been theirs. You are very lucky that we came here in time to destroy their evil and save your life. What are you crying for? Give us our passport at once and let us go."

This finally brought the king to his senses, and then the civil and military officials reported together, "The first two who died were indeed a white deer and a yellow tiger; and the cauldron contains the bones of an antelope.

The holy monk must be believed."

"If that is the case I must thank the holy monk," said the king, who then said to his tutor, "it is late now, so please take the holy monks to the Deep Wisdom Monastery. Tomorrow morning the Eastern hall of the palace shall be opened up and the royal kitchens shall lay on a vegetarian banquet as a mark of our thanks." They were then taken to the monastery, where they slept that night.

Shortly before dawn the next morning the king held an audience at which he ordered the officials to issue a notice to be posted at the four gates of the city and on every road recalling Buddhist monks. While the banquet was being set out the king went in his carriage to the

gates of the Deep Wisdom Monastery to invite the Tang Priest and his disciples to the banquet in the Eastern hall of the palace.

When the Buddhist monks who had escaped learned of the notice they all returned in delight to the city to find the Great Sage Monkey, return his hairs, and thank him. When the banquet was over the king returned Sanzang the passport and escorted him out through the gates of the palace with his queen, consorts and concubines and the civil and military officials, The Buddhist monks could be seen kneeling beside the road and calling out, "Great Sage Equaling Heaven, we are the monks your lordship saved on the sandbank. Now that we have heard that you lordship has destroyed those evil beings and saved us, and His Majesty has issued a notice recalling us monks, we have come to return your hairs and kowtow in gratitude."

"How many of you are there here?" Monkey asked.

"All five hundred: we are not one short."

Monkey then shook himself and took the hairs back before saying to king, subjects, monks and lay people alike, "It was I who released these monks, it was I who took the cart through the two gates and along the ridge before smashing it, and it was I who killed those evil Taoists. Now that the evil has been destroyed you will realize that there is a Way in the Buddha's faith. From now on you must have no more foolish beliefs. I hope that you will combine the three teachings by honoring both the Buddhist clergy and the Way of Taoism, and by also educating men of talent in the Confucian tradition. I can guarantee that this will make you kingdom secure for ever." The king accepted this advice and expressed his gratitude at great length as he accompanied the Tang Priest out of the city.

Because they were seriously seeking the scriptures,

They strove to maintain their brightness of spirit.

Chapter 47

Setting out at dawn and not stopping till nightfall, they drank when thirsty and ate when hungry. Before they realized it spring and summer were over and it was autumn again. Late one day the Tang Priest reined in his horse and asked, "Where shall we spend the night,

disciples?"

"Master," said Monkey, "a man of religion shouldn't talk like a layman."

"What is the difference in the way they talk?" Sanzang asked.

"At a time like this," said Monkey, "a layman would be fast asleep in a warm bed wrapped up in a quilt with his child in his arms and a wife to keep his feet warm. We monks can't expect anything like that. We have only the moon and the stars to cover us with. We dine on the wind and sleep in the dew. We travel when we can find a way and only stop when there's no way forward."

"Brother," said Pig, "you only know half of the story. The trail is very steep now and I can barely manage my heavy load. We've got to find somewhere where I can get a good night's sleep and build myself up to carry my load tomorrow. Otherwise I'm going to collapse from exhaustion."

"Let's go a little further in the moonlight," said Monkey. "When we reach a house we can stay there." Master and disciples had no choice but to carry on with Monkey.

They had not been going for long when they heard the sound of waves. "That's done it," said Pig. "We've come to the end of the road."

"There's a river in our way," said Friar Sand.

"How are we going to get across?" asked the Tang Priest.

"Let me test it for depth," said Pig.

"Don't talk nonsense, Wuneng," said Sanzang. "How could you test the water for depth?"

"Find a pebble the size of a goose egg and throw it in," Pig replied. "If it makes a big splash the water's shallow; and if it goes down with bubbles the water's deep."

"Test it then," said Monkey. The idiot then picked up a stone and threw it into the water; they heard the bubbles rising as the stone sunk.

"It's deep, too deep," he said, "we'll never get across."

"You have tested for depth," said the Tang Priest, "but we don't know

how wide it is."

"I can't tell that," said Pig.

"Let me have a look," said Monkey. The splendid Great Sage sprang up into mid–air on his cloud and took a good look. What he saw was:

The light of the moon immersed in the vastness,

The floating reflection of the limitless sky.

Chapter 47

651

Journey to the West

The magical stream has swallowed Mount Hua;

Hundreds of rivers flow into its waters.

Waves in their thousands rise and then fall,

Towering breakers crash without number.

No fisherman burns his fire by the shore;

The herons are all now asleep on the sand.

It is as turbid and huge as the ocean,

And there is no end to its water in sight.

Monkey brought his cloud quickly down, put it away, and reported, "It's wide, Master, very wide. We'll never get across it. My fiery eyes with their golden pupils can see there hundred miles by day and distinguish good from evil too. By night they can see a hundred to a hundred and fifty miles. If even I can't see the other bank goodness only knows how wide it is."

Sanzang was speechless with shock, then he sobbed, "What are we to do, disciples?"

"Don't cry, Master," said Friar Sand. "There's someone standing by the river over there."

"I expect it's a fisherman working his nets," said Monkey. "I'll go and

ask him." Monkey took his iron cudgel in his hand and was before the man in two or three bounds, only to discover that it was in fact a stone tablet on which was inscribed in an ancient script three words in large letters and nine words in two rows of little ones underneath. The three words written large were RIVER OF HEAVEN, and the words in small writing were

"250 miles across; few travelers have ever been here."

"Master," called Monkey, "come and take a look."

When Sanzang read this he said through his tears, "Disciple, when I left Chang'an all those years ago I thought that the Western Heaven would be easy to get to. I never knew that so many evil monsters would block my way, or that there would be such enormous mountains and rivers to cross."

"Listen, Master," said Pig. "Where is that sound of drums and cymbals coming from? It must be people holding a religious feast. Let's go and get some of the food to eat and find out where there is a boat that will ferry us across tomorrow." When Sanzang listened as he sat on the horse he could hear that it really was the sound of drums and cymbals.

"Those aren't Taoist instruments," he said. "It must be some Buddhist monks performing a ceremony. Let's go there." Monkey led the horse as they headed towards the music. There was no track to follow as they climbed and then lost height again and crossed sand banks until a village of some four or five hundred households came into sight. It was a fine settlement:

Chapter 47

Protected by hills, beside the main road,

On the bank of the river, and watered by a stream.

All the wicket gates were shut;

Every household's bamboo fence was closed.

Clear were the dreams of the egrets on the strand,

Silent the song of the birds by the willows.

No sound came from the flute,

Nothing was heard of the chopping – board's rhythm.

The moon was rocked in stalks of knotweed;

The leaves of the rushes trembled in the wind.

Beside the fields the dogs barked through the fence;

The fisherman slept in his boat moored by the ford.

Few were the lights amid the stillness,

And the moon hung like a mirror in the sky,

A smell of duckweed wafted over

Carried by the wind from the Western bank.

When Sanzang dismounted he saw a house at the end of the road outside of which hung a silken banner.

Inside it was bright with candles and lanterns, and there were clouds of incense.

"Wukong," said Sanzang, "this is much better than a mountain hollow or the bank of a stream. Under the eaves we will be able to relax and sleep soundly, protected from the chilly dew. You all keep out of the way while I go to the gates of the believer's house that is giving the religious feast to ask for shelter. If they invite me in I shall call you over. But don't start playing it up if they don't invite me in. If you show your ugly faces you might give them a terrible fright and cause trouble, and then we would have nowhere to stay."

"You're right," said Monkey. "You go ahead, Master, while we wait here."

The venerable elder then took off his rain hat, straightened his habit, took his monastic staff in his hand and went bareheaded to the gates, which were ajar. Not venturing to walk in uninvited, Sanzang stood there for a while until a very old man with prayer – beads round his neck who was repeating the name of Amitabha Buddha came out to shut the gate.

Sanzang at once put his hands together before his chest and said, "I salute you, benefactor." The old man returned his greeting then said, "You're too late, monk."

"What do you mean?" Sanzang asked.

"You're too late to get anything," the old man said. "If you had been here earlier we were giving each monk a good meal, three pints of polished rice, a piece of white cloth, and ten copper cash. Why have you only come now?"

"Benefactor," Sanzang replied, "I am not here to collect offerings."

"If you're not here for offerings, what are you here for then?" the old man asked.

"I have been sent by the Emperor of the Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven," Sanzang replied. "It was already late when I reached this village, and I have come here to beg for a night's shelter because I heard the drums and cymbals. I will be

on my way at dawn."

The old man shook his hand at him as he replied, "Monk, men of religion should not tell lies. Great Tang in the East is 18,000 miles from here. How could you have come from there by yourself?"

"You are quite right, benefactor," said Sanzang. "I have only been able to reach here because I have three disciples who protect me. They clear paths across mountains and build bridges across rivers."

"If you have these disciples," the old man said, "why aren't they with you? But do come in. We have room for you to stay here."

Sanzang then looked back and called, "Come here, disciples."

As Monkey was impatient by nature, Pig coarse, and Friar Sand impetuous, the moment they heard their master calling they grabbed the horse's bridle and the luggage and ran in, hell—bent for leather. The sight of them gave the old man such a shock that he collapsed, muttering, "Demons, demons."

"Please don't be afraid, benefactor," said Sanzang. "They're not demons, they are my disciples."

"But how could so handsome a master have such hideous disciples?" asked the old man, still shivering and shaking.

"They may not be much to look at," said Sanzang, "but they certainly know how to subdue dragons and tigers and capture monsters and demons." The old man was not entirely convinced as he helped the Tang Priest inside.

The three ferocious disciples rushed to the main hall, tied the horse up outside and put the baggage down.

Several monks were reciting sutras inside. Covering his long snout with his hands, Pig shouted, "What's that sutra you're reciting, monks?" The monks looked up when they heard his question.

They looked at the stranger and saw a long snout,

As well as a pair of big ears that stuck out.

His body was rough and his shoulders were broad;

When he opened his muzzle, like thunder he roared.

But as for our Monkey and good Friar Sand,

Their faces were more than a person could stand.

The monks saying their sutras within the main hall

Were terribly frightened and scared one and all.

The teacher continued the text to recite,

Until the head monk said they should stop for the night.

They paid no more heed to the chimes and the bell,

And the Buddha's own images from their hands fell.

They all blew at once to put out every light,

And tried in their terror to scatter in flight.

They crawl on the ground as they stumble and fall,

And all of them trip getting out of that hall.

One old monk's head with another one clashes

Just like the collapse of piled – up calabashes.

What once was a pure and a most holy rite

Was all now reduced to a comical sight.

The sight of the monks stumbling and crawling about made the three disciples clap their hands and laugh aloud, at which the monks were more terrified than ever. Colliding with each other's heads they all fled for their lives and disappeared. By the time Sanzang helped the old man into the hall the lights had all been put out and the three of them were still chuckling away.

"Damned creatures," said Sanzang, "you are all thoroughly evil, despite my daily teaching and advice. As the ancients said,

Only the saintly can become good without instruction;

Only the worthy can become good after instruction;

Only idiots will not become good even with instruction.

The disgraceful scene you've just made is one of the lowest and most stupid things I could possibly imagine.

You charge in through the gates without any respect, make our elderly benefactor collapse in fright, send all the monks fleeing for their lives, and completely ruin their service. I shall have to take the blame for all of this." None of them could find a word to say in their defense.

Only then did the old man believe that they really were Sanzang's disciples, turn back, and say, "It's nothing, sir, nothing. The lamps have just been put out and the flowers scattered as the service is ending anyhow."

"If it's over," said Pig, "bring out the food and wine for the completion feast. We need a meal before we go to bed." The old man called for oil lamps to be lit. The servants could not understand why.

"There are lots of incense sticks and candles where they're saying surras in the main hall, so why does he want oil lamps lit?"

When some servants came out to look they found everything in darkness, so they lit torches and lanterns and rushed in together. When they looked inside and suddenly saw Pig and Friar Sand they dropped their torches in terror and fled, shutting the doors behind them, and fleeing to the inner part of the house with shout of

"Demons, demons!"

Monkey picked up a torch, lit some lamps and candles, and pulled up an armchair for the Tang Priest to sit in while the disciples sat on either side of him. As they were sitting there talking they heard a door leading from the inner part of the house being opened. Another old man came in leaning on a stick and asking, "What evil spirits are you, coming to this pious household in the middle of the night?"

The first old man, who was sitting in front of them, rose and went to meet him behind the screen saying, "Stop shouting, elder brother. These aren't demons. This is an arhat sent from Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures. His disciples may look evil but really they are very good." Only then did the old man put his stick down and bow in greeting to the four of them, after which he too sat down in front of them and called for tea and vegetarian food. He shouted several times, but the servants were still quaking with terror and too frightened to come in.

This was more than Pig could put up with. "Old man," he said, "you have an awful lot of servants. What have they all gone off to do?"

"I have sent them to fetch food to offer to you gentlemen," the old man replied.

"How many of them will be serving the food?" asked Pig.

"Eight," said the old man.

"Who will they be waiting on?" asked Pig.

"You four gentlemen," the old man replied.

"Our master, the one with the white face, only needs one person to wait on him," said Pig. "The one with hair cheeks whose mouth looks like a thunder god only needs two. That vicious—looking creature needs eight, and I must have twenty."

"From what you say must be rather a big eater," the old man remarked.

"You're about right," said Pig.

"We have enough servants," the old man said, and by bringing together servants of all ages he produced thirty or forty of them.

As the monks talked to the old man the servants lost their fear and set a table in front of the Tang Priest, inviting him to take the place of honour. They then put three more tables on both sides of him, at which they asked the three disciples to sit, and another in front of

these for the two old men. On the tables were neatly arranged some fruit, vegetables, pasta, rice, refreshments and pea—noodle soup. Sanzang raised his chopsticks and started to say a grace over the food, but the idiot, who was impatient and hungry to boot, did not wait for him to finish before grabbing a red lacquered wooden bowl of white rice that he scooped up and gulped down in a single mouthful.

"Sir," said the servant standing beside him, "you didn't think very carefully. If you are going to keep food in your sleeves shouldn't you take steamed bread instead of rice that will get your clothes duty?"

"I didn't put it in my sleeve," chuckled Pig, "I ate it."

"But you didn't even open your mouth," they said, "so how could you have eaten it?"

"Who is lying then?" said Pig. "I definitely ate it. If you don't believe me I'll eat another to show you." The servants carried the rice over, filled a bowlful, and passed it to Pig, who had it down his throat in a flash.

"Sir," said the astonished servants, "you must have a throat built of whetstones, it's so smooth and slippery."

Pig had downed five or six bowls before the master could finish the short grace; only then did he pick up his chopsticks and start eating with them. The idiot grabbed whatever he could and bolted it, not caring whether it was rice or pasta, fruit or refreshments.

"More food, more food," he shouted, until it gradually began to run out, "Brother," said Monkey, "don't eat so much. Make do with being half full. Anyhow, it's better than starving in a mountain hollow."

"What a horrible face you're making," said Pig. "As the saying goes, The monk at a banquet who can't eat his fill

Would rather be buried alive on the hill."

"Clear the things away and pay no more attention to him," said Monkey.

"We will be frank with you, reverend sirs," said the two old men with bows. "We would have no problem in feeding a hundred or more reverend gentlemen with big bellies like him in the daytime, but it is late now and the remains of the maigre—feast have been put away. We only cooked a bushel of noodles, five bushels of rice and a few

tables of vegetarian food to feed our neighbors and the clergy at the end of the service. We never imagined that you reverend gentlemen would turn up and put the monks to flight. We have not even been able to offer any food to our relations and neighbors as we have given it all to you. If you are still hungry we can Chapter 47

have some more cooked."

"Yes," said Pig, "cook some more."

After this exchange the tables and other things used for the banquet were tidied away. Sanzang bowed to his hosts to thank them for the meal, then asked them their surname. "We are called Chen," they replied.

"Then you are kinsmen of mine," said Sanzang, putting his hands together in front of his chest.

"Is your surname Chen as Well?" the old men asked.

"Yes," Sanzang replied, "Chen was my surname before I became a monk. May I ask why you were holding that religious feast just now?"

"Why brother to ask, Master?" said Pig with a laugh. "Anyone could tell you that it's bound to have been a feast for the new crops, or for safety, or for the end of funeral ceremonies."

"No, it was not," the old men said.

"Then what was it for?" Sanzang asked.

"It was a feast to prepare for death," the old men replied.

"You don't know who you're talking to," said Pig, falling about with laughter. "We could build a bridge out of lies. We're kings of deception. Don't try to fool us. As monks we know all about maigre —feasts. There are only preparatory maigre—feasts for transferring money to the underworld and for fulfilling vows. Nobody's died here, so why have a funeral feast?"

"This idiot's learning a bit of sense," chuckled Monkey to himself.

"Old man," he said aloud, "what you said must be wrong. How can you

have a feast to prepare for death?"

At this the two old men bowed and replied, "And if you were going to fetch the scriptures why did you come here instead of taking the main route?"

"We were on the main route," replied Monkey, "but a river was in our way and we weren't able to cross it. We came to your distinguished residence to ask for a night's shelter because we heard the drums and cymbals."

"What did you see by the side of the river?" one of the old men asked.

"Nothing but a stone tablet on which was written 'River of Heaven' above and '250 miles across; few travelers have ever been here' underneath," Monkey replied.

"Less than half a mile along the bank from the stone tablet is the Temple of the Great King of Miraculous Response," the old man said. "Did you not see it?"

"No," Monkey replied. "Would you old gentlemen tell me why he's called 'Miraculous Response?'"

The two old men burst into tears as they replied, "My lord, as for the Great King, Chapter 47

Because he responded a temple we built;

His miracles greatly the common folk helped.

He sends timely rain to the farms all about;

His clouds give their moisture to keep us from drought."

"But if he sends timely rain and clouds he's being kind to you," said Brother Monkey, "so why are you so upset and miserable?" At this the old man stamped on the ground, beat his chest and wailed, "Master, Great is our gratitude, greater our anger:

Although he is kind he is also a danger.

He is not one of the gods true and right— —

To eat boys and girls is his evil delight."

"He likes eating boys and girls?" Brother Monkey exclaimed.

"Yes," replied the old man.

"I suppose it's your family's turn now," said Monkey.

"Yes, this year it is our turn," the old man said. "There are a hundred households living here. This place is called Chen Village, and it is in Yuanhui County of the Kingdom of Tarrycart. There is a sacrifice to the Great King every year at which a boy, a girl, pigs, sheep, oxen and wine have to be offered. If he gets his meal he gives us wind and rain at the right time; but if there is no sacrifice he sends disaster."

"How many sons are there in your household?" Monkey asked.

The old man beat his breast and said, "Alas, alas, we die of shame when you speak of sons. This is my brother, Chen Qing, who is fifty – seven. I am Chen Cheng and am sixty – two. We have both found great difficulty in having children. As I had no son my friends and relations persuaded me to take a concubine when I was nearly fifty. I had no option but to find one and we had a daughter. She is just seven this year, and we call her Pan of Gold."

"That's a very grand name," said Pig. "But why Pan of Gold?"

"Because we were childless we built bridges, repaired roads, contributed to putting up monasteries and pagodas, gave donations and fed monks. We kept an account of all this, and what with three ounces spent here and five spent there it added up to thirty pounds of gold by the time the girl was born. Thirty pounds is a pan of gold, and hence the name."

"What about sons?" Monkey asked.

"My brother has a son who was also by a concubine. He is six this year, and we call him Chen Guan – given."

"Why did you call him that?" Monkey asked. "In our family we worship Lord Guan Yu, and we called him Guan – given as it was from

the statue of Lord Guan that we begged and obtained this son. My brother and I are 120 between us if you add our ages together, and these are our only two offspring. We never imagined that it would fall to us to provide the sacrificial offerings this year, and this is a duty we cannot escape. It is because as fathers we cannot bear to part from our children that we held this service to bring about rebirth, this maigre —feast to prepare for death."

This brought the tears pouring down Sanzang's cheeks as he replied, "This is what the ancients mean when they said,

Long before the ripe ones the green plums always fall;

The harshness of heaven hits the childless worst of all."

Monkey smiled at this and said, "Let me ask some more questions. Tell me, sir, how much property does your family have?"

"Quite a lot," the younger old man replied. "About seven hundred acres of paddy fields, a thousand acres of dry fields, eighty or ninety fields of hay, two or three hundred water—buffalo and oxen, twenty or thirty donkeys and horses, and goodness only knows how many pigs, sheep, chickens and geese. We have more old grain piled up at home than we can eat, and more clothes than we can wear. That is the extent of our family's property."

"It's a pity you're so stingy with all your wealth," said Monkey.

"How can you accuse us of being stingy?" the old man asked.

"If you're so rich," said Monkey, "why give your own children to be sacrificed? You could buy a boy for fifty ounces and a girl for a hundred. With all the other expenses together it shouldn't cost you more than two hundred ounces of silver to keep your own children. Wouldn't that be better?"

To this the younger old man replied through his tears, "My lord, you don't realize that the Great King is miraculously responsive, and that he often calls on this household."

"If he comes here have you seen what he looks like and how tall he is?" asked Brother Monkey.

"We don't see him," the younger old man replied, "we just know that the Great King is coming when we smell a fragrant wind. Then we burn huge amounts of incense and all of us, young and old alike,

prostrate ourselves in the direction of the wind. He knows every trifling detail about our household – –even about our spoons and the bowls we use – –and remembers all our dates of birth. He will only accept our own son and daughter.

Never mind two or three hundred ounces of silver: we could not buy identical–looking children of exactly the same age for tens of thousands of ounces."

Chapter 47

"So it's like that," said Monkey. "Very well then, bring your son out for me to take a look at him." Chen Qing hurried to the inner part of the house, brought Guan–given back with him into the hall, and set the boy down in front of the lamp. Not realizing the mortal danger he was in the little boy leapt about, filled his sleeves with fruit, ate and played around. Monkey looked at him, said a spell silently, shook himself, and made himself look just like Guan–given. Then the two boys started to jump and dance in front of the lamp, giving the two old men such a shock that they fell to their knees.

"That was a terrible thing for him to do, venerable sirs," said Sanzang.

"But the gentleman was talking to us a moment ago," said the old man. "How can he have turned into the exact likeness of my son? When you call them they respond and move together. This shock has shortened our lives. Please return to your normal appearance!" Monkey rubbed his face and was himself once more. "What powers you have, my lord," said the old man, still on his knees.

"Was I like your son?" Monkey asked.

"Yes, just like him," the old man replied. "Same face, same voice, same clothes, same height."

"You didn't look carefully enough," said Monkey. "Get some scales and weigh me to see if I'm the same weight as him."

"Yes, yes, the same weight," the old man said.

"Would I do for the sacrifice like that?" asked Monkey.

"Perfect," said the old man, "just perfect. You would be accepted."

"I shall take the child's place and keep him alive for your family to have descendants to burn incense to you,"

said Monkey. "I shall be offered to the Great King instead." At this Chen Qing kowtowed as he knelt there, saying, "My lord, if in your mercy you were to take his place I will give His Reverence the Tang Priest a thousand ounces of silver towards the cost of his journey to the Western Heaven."

"Aren't you going to reward me?" asked Monkey.

"But if you are sacrificed in the boy's place it will be the end of you," said the old man.

"What do you mean?" Monkey asked.

"The Great King will eat you," the old man replied.

"He'd dare to eat me?" said Monkey.

"The only reason he might not eat you would be if he thought you would taste too high," the old man said.

"Let Heaven do as it will," said Monkey. "If I'm eaten up it'll be because I'm fated to have a short life; and if I'm not eaten it'll be because I'm lucky. Take me to the sacrifice."

While Chen Qing kowtowed, expressed his thanks, and presented them with five hundred ounces of silver Chen Cheng neither kowtowed nor thanked Monkey, but leant against the doorway sobbing. As soon as Brother Monkey noticed this he went up to him, took hold of his clothes, and said, "Old man, is it because you can't bear to lose your daughter that you're not giving me anything or thanking me?"

Only then did Chen Cheng fall to his knees and reply, "Yes, I cannot bear to lose her. It is enough that in your great kindness you are saving my nephew by taking his place. But I have no son. She is my only child and she would weep for me bitterly after my death. I cannot bear to lose her."

"Then you'd better go along at once and cook five bushels of rice and some good vegetarian dishes for that long-snouted venerable gentleman to eat. Then I'll make him turn into the likeness of your daughter and the two of us will be able to take part in the sacrifice. We'll see if we can do a meritorious deed and save your children's lives."

These words came as a great shock to Pig, who said, "Brother, if you turn yourself into a spirit and leave me to die you'll be dragging me into disaster."

"Brother," said Monkey, "as the saying goes, a chicken doesn't eat what it doesn't earn. We came in here and were given an ample meal, but you had to complain that you were still hungry. Why aren't you willing to help them in their crisis?"

"But, brother," protested Pig, "I can't do transformations."

"You can do thirty-six transformations," said Monkey. "How can you possibly deny that?"

"Wuneng," Sanzang said to Pig, "what your brother says is absolutely correct, and he has made the right decision. As the saying goes, to save a human life is better than building a seven-storied pagoda. If you do this you will be thanking our hosts for their generous hospitality and accumulating good karma for yourself.

Besides, it will be fun for you and your brother on this cool night when you have nothing else to do."

"What are you saying, Master?" said Pig. "I can only change into a hill, a tree, a rock, a scabby elephant, a water-buffalo or a big, fat man. It'd be pretty hard for me to turn into a little girl."

"Pay no attention to him," said Monkey to Chen Cheng, "but bring your daughter out for me to see."

Chen Cheng then hurried inside and came back into the hall with Pan of Gold in his arms; and everyone in the household, young and old, wives and concubines, members of the family and other relations, all came in to kowtow and beg Monkey to save the child's life. Round her hair the little girl was wearing a patterned turquoise headband from which hung ornaments representing the eight precious things. Her jacket was of red and yellow shot ramie, and over is she wore a cape in green imperial satin with a checked collar. Her skirt was of scarlet flowered silk, her shoes were of pink ramie and shaped like frogs'

heads, and her trousers were of raw silk with gold thread. She was holding a piece of fruit in her hand and eating it.

"There's the girl," said Monkey. "Make yourself like her at once. We're off to the sacrifice."

"But she's much too small and delicate for me to turn into, brother," said Pig.

"Hurry up if you don't want me to hit you," said Monkey.

"Don't hit me," pleaded Pig in desperation. "I'll see if I can make the change."

The idiot then said the words of a spell, shook his head several times, called "Change!" and really did make his head look like the little girl's. The only troubles was that his belly was still much too fat and disproportionately big.

"Change some more," said Monkey with a laugh.

Chapter 47

"Hit me then," said Pig. "I can't change any more, and that's that."

"But you can't have a little girl's head on a monk's body," said Monkey. "You won't do at all like that— —you're neither a man nor a girl. Do the Dipper star—steps." Monkey then blew on him with magic breath and in fact did change his body to make it look like the little girl's.

"Will you two old gentlemen please take the young master and the young lady inside and make no mistake about who they are," said Monkey. "My brother and I will be trying to dodge the monster and fooling around, and we may come in here, so that it will be hard to tell us from the real children. Have some fruit ready for them to eat and don't let them cry, in case the Great King notices and our secret gets out. Now we're off to see if we can fool him."

The splendid Great Sage then told Friar Sand to look after the Tang Priest while Pig and he changed into Chen Guan—given and Pan of Gold. When the two of them were ready Monkey asked, "How are the victims presented? Tied up in a bundle, or with their hands roped

together? Are they steamed or chopped up into little bits?"

"Brother," pleaded Pig, "don't do me down. I haven't got those magic powers."

"We would never dare to," said the old men. "We would just like you two gentlemen each to sit in a red lacquer dish that would be put on a table. You would then be carried into the temple on the tables by a pair of youngsters."

"Fine, fine," said Monkey. "Bring the dishes in here for us to try out." The old men sent for the two red dishes, in which Monkey and Pig sat while four young men carried them for a few steps in the courtyard before setting them down again in the hall. "Pig," said Monkey with delight, "being carried around on dishes like this makes us like abbots sitting in the seats of honour."

"I wouldn't be at all scared of being carried in and out of here till dawn," said Pig, "but being carried into the temple to be eaten is no joke."

"Just watch me," said Brother Monkey, "and run away when he eats me."

"How do you know who he'll eat first?" said Pig. "If he eats the boy first I'll be able to get away; but what shall I do if he eats the girl first?"

At this one of the old men said, "During the sacrifices in other years some of the bolder of us have slipped into the back of the temple or hidden under the tables on which the offerings were made. They have seen that he eats the boy first and the girl afterwards."

"Thank goodness," said Pig, "thank goodness."

While the two brother–disciples were talking they heard a mighty noise of gongs and drums and a blaze of lights outside as the villagers opened the front gates and poured in, shouting, "Bring out the boy and the girl."

The four young men then carried Monkey and Pig out to the sobs and wails of the old men.

If you do not know whether they lost their lives or not, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 48

A Devilish Blizzard Makes the Snow Whirl

The Monk Who Seeks to Worship Buddha Walks on Ice

The story tells how the believers in Chen Village noisily carried Monkey and Pig with pork, mutton, beef and wine straight to the Temple of Miraculous Response, where they set them all out with the young boy and girl in the most prominent place. Monkey looked around and saw that the offertory tables were covered with fragrant flowers and wax candles. In front of him was a tablet on which were inscribed in letters of gold, GREAT KING OF MIRACULOUS RESPONSE. There were no statues of any other gods. When the believers had set everything out properly they all kowtowed and made this prayer:

"Great King, our lord, at this hour of this day of this month of this year Chen Cheng, the master of the sacrifice, and all the other faithful of different ages beg to offer in accordance with annual custom the little boy Chen Guan – given, the little girl Pan of Gold, pork, mutton, beef and wine for the delectation of the Great King. We beg you to give us the right amounts of wind and rain and to grant a good harvest for all our crops."

After praying they burnt paper horses and all went home.

When they had all gone Pig said to Monkey, "Let's go home."

"Where's your home?" Monkey asked.

"Let's go back to old Chen's place for a sleep," Pig replied.

"You're talking nonsense again, idiot," said Monkey. "You've made them a promise and now you've got to fulfil their wish."

"You're the idiot, not me, despite what you've always saying," replied Pig. "Why don't we just take him for a ride. You can't be serious about us being sacrificed for them."

"Always finish what you begin," said Monkey. "We'll only be able to

tidy this business up if we stay here till the Great King comes to eat us up. Otherwise we'll make him cause disasters, which would be terrible."

As they were talking they heard the howling of a wind outside. "This is terrible," said Pig. "What made the wind come?" "

Shut up," said Monkey, "while I cope." A moment later an evil creature came in through the temple doors.

Look at him:

Gold armor, golden helmet, shining bright;

Red clouds enfold the jade belt at his waist.

His eyes were gleaming like the stars at night,

His teeth resembled those on a pair of saws.

Chapter 48

Under his feet wafted sunset clouds;

Warm and scented were the mists all around.

Cold blew the negative winds as he walked;

Heavy lay the air of death where he stood.

He was just like an officer guarding an emperor,

Or a god at the gateway protecting a monastery.

The monster stood blocking the entrance to the temple and asked, "Who is making the sacrifice this year?"

"Thank you for asking," Monkey replied. "This year the village heads are the family of Chen Cheng and Chen Qing." This reply struck the monster as very odd.

"That boy has a lot of courage," he thought, "and he's a good talker too. Usually the children who are offered say nothing the first time I

ask them a question and are frightened out of their wits the second time. Before I've even grabbed them in my hand they are already dead. So why's this boy today so good at answering?"

Instead of seizing him the monster asked another question: "What is your name, boy?"

"My name is Chen Guan – given, and the girl is called Pan of Gold."

"According to the old custom of this sacrifice I should eat you first," said the monster.

"I have no objection," said Brother Monkey. "Enjoy your meal."

Hearing this the monster was once more afraid to grab Monkey, so instead he blocked the doorway and shouted, "I'll have none of your answering back. Usually I eat the boy first, but this year I shall start with the girl."

"Better to follow the old custom," said Pig in a panic. "Don't break with tradition."

Without any more discussion the monster made a grab for Pig, who leapt down, turned back into himself, and struck at the monster's hand with his rake. The monster pulled his hand back and fled. All that could be heard was a mighty clang. "I've smashed his armor," exclaimed Pig.

Monkey, who had resumed his own true form as well, looked, saw two fish scales the size of an ice dish, and gave a shout of "After him!"

The two of them sprang up into the air, where the monster, who had come unarmed to his feast, asked them from a cloud, "Where are you from, monks, and why have you come here to bully me, spoil my offerings, and ruin my reputation?"

"What you don't realize, damned monster," Monkey replied, "is that we are disciples of the holy priest Sanzang from Great Tang in the East who has been sent by his emperor to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. We were spending last night at the Chen household when were told that an evil spirit Chapter 48

pretending to be Miraculous Response demands the sacrifice of a boy and a girl every year. In our mercy we decided to save life and capture you, damned monster. You'd better make a full and true confession at once.

How long have you been here calling yourself 'Great King,' and at two a year how many little boys and girls have you eaten? Given me a full account and return them to me if you want your life spared." At that the monster fled, avoiding another blow that Pig struck at him with his rake. He turned into a wild wind and went straight into the River of Heaven.

"No need to chase him," said Monkey. "I'm sure the monster's a river creature. We'll have to work out a way of catching him and getting the master across the river tomorrow." Pig accepted this suggestion and went straight back to the temple, from where he carried the offerings of pork, mutton and wine, tables and all, back to the Chen house. The Tang Priest, Friar Sand and the Chen brothers were waiting for news in the hall when they saw Monkey and Pig burst in and put all the pork, mutton and other offerings in the courtyard.

"What happened in the sacrifice, Wukong?" Sanzang asked Monkey, who related how he had told the monster who he was and chased him into the river, to the immense delight of the two old gentlemen, who ordered that the side rooms were to be swept out and furnished with beds. Here the master and his disciples were invited to spend the night.

Having escaped with his life back to the river the monster sat brooding silently in his palace while his river clansmen asked him, "Why are you so upset this year, Your Majesty? Usually you are very happy when you come back from eating your sacrifice."

"In ordinary years I bring you back some left—overs after the sacrifice," said the monster, "but I did not even have anything to eat myself today. My luck was out. I met enemies who all but killed me."

"Who, Your Majesty?"

"Disciples of a holy priest from Great Tang in the East who is going to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. They had turned themselves into a boy and a girl and were sitting in my temple. When they turned back into themselves they almost killed me. I've long heard people tell of Tang Sanzang, a holy man who has cultivated his conduct for ten lifetimes: one piece of his flesh will

make you immortal. But I never expected he would have disciples such as those. He's ruined my reputation and stopped them worshipping me any more. I wish I could capture that Tang Priest, but I don't think I can."

From among the watery tribe there slipped forward a female mandarin fish in patterned clothes. She advanced with small, respectful steps towards the monster, bowing frequently as she said, "Your Majesty, there will be no problem about catching the Tang Priest. But if you do capture him will you reward me with a feast?"

"If you have a plan we shall combine our efforts to catch the Tang Priest," the monster said. "I shall take you as my sworn sister, and we shall eat his flesh together."

The mandarin fish bowed in thanks then said, "I have long known that Your Majesty has the powers to call up wind and rain, or to throw rivers and sea into turmoil. But can you make it snow?"

"Yes," the monster replied. "As you can make it snow," the mandarin fish continued, "can you also cause cold and make ice?"

"I'm even better at that," the monster said. The fish then clapped her hands with delight and said, "In that case it will be very, very easy."

Chapter 48

666

Journey to the West

"Will you tell me this very easy way of succeeding?" the monster asked.

"Your Majesty must lose no time," the fish replied. "It's now the third watch, about midnight. You must make magic to cause a cold wind and a heavy fall of snow at once. The River of Heaven must be frozen solid. Those of us who are good at transformations will make ourselves look like people and appear at the end of the track with packs on our backs, carrying umbrellas and luggage poles and pushing carts. We shall walk across the ice in an endless stream. That Tang Priest is so impatient to fetch the scriptures that when he sees all those people walking along he's bound to want to cross the ice himself. All Your Majesty needs to do is to sit quietly in the middle of the river until you hear his footsteps, then crack the ice apart so that he and his disciples all fall into the water. They'll all be caught in one

package."

"Marvellous, marvellous," exclaimed the monster, who was utterly delighted at the suggestion. He left his watery palace and went up into the sky, where he caused winds and snow, and made it so cold that the river froze.

The Tang Priest and his three disciples slept in the Chen house. Shortly before dawn they all began to feel very cold in their bedding. Pig was shivering, unable to get back to sleep, so he called, "Brother, it's cold."

"Idiot," said Monkey, "you've got no sense of how to behave. Monks are not affected by summer or winter.

You shouldn't mind the cold."

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "it really is cold. Look: Double quilts now give no warmth,

Hands put in sleeves find only ice.

Strands of frost grow from withered leaves,

Frozen bells hang from frozen pines.

The cold is so intense the earth splits open;

The water in the pond is a solid block.

No old man can be seen in the fisherman's boat;

No monk is to be met with in the mountain temple.

The woodman wishes he could gather more fuel;

The prince is glad to pile more charcoal on the flames.

Travelers' beards are turned to iron;

The poet's brush is water—chestnut hard.

Even a fur jacket now seems too thin;

A marten coat feels much too light.

The monk on his hassock is frozen rigid;

Behind the paper screen the traveler is scared.

Even in many a layer of bedding

One shivers and shakes from top to toe.

As neither master nor disciples could sleep they rose and dressed. When they opened the door to look outside they saw to their astonishment a vast expanse of white. It was snowing. "No wonder we were so cold," said Monkey, "if it's been snowing so heavily." When the four of them looked they saw that it was a splendid fall: Dark masses of cloud,

Chilling, dreary mists.

Under dark masses of cloud

The North wind howls cold;

Through chilling, dreary mists

A heavy snowfall blankets the ground.

Indeed:

The six–sided snowflakes

Are flying jewels;

In the great forest

Jade hangs from every tree.

First like flour, then like salt.

The white parrot loses its whiteness,

The crane's feathers no longer stand out.

It adds to the waters of a thousand rivers,

Outdoes the plum–trees in the Southeast.

As if three million dragons of jade were defeated,

Chapter 48

668

Journey to the West

The sky is filled with fragments of armor and scales.

Here you will not find Dongguo's soleless sandals,

The bed where Yuan An froze to death,

The place where Sun Kang studied in the snow's reflected light, The boat that Wang Ziyou took one snowy night,

Wang Gong's cloak,

Or the rug that Su Wu had to eat.

All you will see are village houses set like inlaid silver,

Three thousand miles of jade—like river and hills.

What splendid snow,

Sprinkling the bridge with willow catkins,

Covering the cottage with pear blossom.

When the bridge is sprinkled with willow catkins,

The fisherman beside it dons his cape of straw;

When the cottage is covered with pear blossom

The old man inside bums his firewood.

The traveler is hard put to it to buy a drink;

The slave cannot find the plum blossom for which be is sent.

The heavy fall of snow takes off the butterfly's wings,

The howling blizzard strips the goose of its feathers.

Rolling drifts are blown by the winds;

Layer upon layer hides the road.

Freezing gusts come through the curtains,

A chilly wind blows into the bed.

This is Heaven's promise of a good harvest,

Good news that is cause for celebration.

Chapter 48

669

Journey to the West

The snow was falling in abundance like fragments of jade or cotton wool. When master and disciples had sighed in admiration of it for a long time the two old Chen brothers told two servants to sweep a way through the snow and two more to bring the monks hot water with which to wash their faces. A little later boiling hot tea, cheesecakes and a charcoal stove were all carried out to the side room, where master and disciple sat around them.

"Venerable benefactor," the Tang Priest asked, "could you tell me if you distinguish between the seasons of the year here?"

"This may be a remote place," said the old man, "and our customs and people may be different from those in your distinguished land, but our crops and animals grow under the same sky, so of course we distinguish between the four seasons."

"In that case why is there such heavy snow today, and why is it so cold?" Sanzang asked.

"Although it has been August," the old man replied, "the frost last night marked the beginning of September.

We generally have frost and snow here in September."

"That is different from the East," said Sanzang. "We have frost and snow in the winter."

As they were talking servants came in with tables and invited them to take some porridge. By the time they had finished eating the snow was heavier than ever and before long it lay two feet deep. Sanzang began to weep with anxiety.

"Please don't worry so," said old Mr. Chen, "and don't be upset because the snow is deep. We have plenty of grain here, enough to feed you venerable gentlemen for half a lifetime."

"You do not know why I am suffering, benefactor," Sanzang replied. "When all those years ago His Majesty the Tang Emperor graciously commanded me to make this journey and escorted me in person by carriage to the frontier pass he offered me a parting meal with his own hands, asking me when I would be back. I did not realize how many difficult mountains and rivers would lie in my way, so I casually replied that I could be back with the scriptures in three years. It is now already seven or eight years since I left and I have yet to gaze on the face of the Buddha. I am worried that I have exceeded His Majesty's time limit and afraid of all the evil monsters and other vicious creatures ahead. Today I have had the good fortune to stay in your great mansion, and last night my disciples were able to thank you by doing you a small favour. I was hoping to ask for a boat to ferry us across the river, never expecting that Heaven would send this heavy fall of snow. Now the roads are blocked and I do not know when I shall complete my mission and return home."

"Do not worry, sir," said old Mr. Chen. "Most of the time for your journey has already passed. You will only have to wait here a few days for the skies to clear and the ice to melt, then we will spend everything we have to see you across the river."

A servant then came in to invite them to breakfast, which they ate in the main hall, followed not long afterwards by lunch. Sanzang felt embarrassed by all this lavish hospitality, so he said repeatedly, "As you are being so kind as to let us stay we must insist on eating more ordinary fare."

"Venerable sir," Mr. Chen replied, "we are so grateful for having the children saved from the sacrifice that we could not thank you enough even if we gave you banquets every day."

Chapter 48

After this the snow stopped and people began to move around. Seeing how unhappy Sanzang was, old Mr.

Chen had the garden swept and a fire made in a brazier, then invited

them to the snow – cave to cheer themselves up by enjoying the snow view.

"What a silly idea," laughed Pig. "Spring is the time for enjoying gardens. It's much too cold in all this snow, and anyhow there's nothing to be seen now."

"You don't know anything, you idiot," said Monkey. "Snowscapes are very peaceful and elegant. It will be a pleasure to see them and it will make the master feel better too."

"That's right, that's right," said old Mr. Chen. The visitors were then taken into the garden and this is what they saw:

Although it was autumn

The scenery was winter's.

Jade stamens formed on the hoary pine,

Silvery flowers hung from the dying willow.

Powder was piled on the lichen by the steps,

Jeweled shoots sprang from the bamboo at the window.

The craggy mountain tops,

The fishpond.

On the craggy mountain tops

The sharp and pointed peaks were like jade bamboo.

In the fishpond

The clear and living water now was ice,

Gone was the beauty of the lotus by the bank;

The rose of Sharon's delicate fronds hung low.

The autumn begonia

Was weighed right down;

The winter plum

Was just putting out new growth.

Chapter 48

671

Journey to the West

The Peony Pavilion,

The Pomegranate Pavilion,

The Osmanthus Pavilion,

All piled deep in goose – down;

The Place for Forgetting Cares,

The Place for Entertaining Visitors,

The Place for Recreation,

All covered as if with butterflies' wings.

The yellow chrysanthemums by the fence were woven of jade and gold; A few maples were dappled white and red.

Many a courtyard was too cold to enter:

The sight of the snow – cave made one feel like ice.

Here was set a brazier of bronze,

With heads of animals and legs like elephants,

Where a toasting – hot fire of charcoal burnt,

And some lacquered armchairs

With cushions of tigerskin

And screens of paper set all around for warmth.

On the walls were hung ancient paintings by famous artists, showing: The Seven Worthies going out through the pass,

A solitary fisherman on a cold river,

Amid a landscape of snowy peaks and mountains.

Su Wu eating his rug,

Breaking off plum branches to meet the envoys,

Chapter 48

672

Journey to the West

And writing in the cold of a frozen forest.

There was no end of

Houses near a river pavilion where fish can be bought,

Mountain tracks buried in snow where no wine is on sale.

Were it big enough to live in

Who would need to go to magical Penghu?

After they had admired the scenery for a long time they sat down in the snow–cave and told the elderly neighbors about their mission to fetch the scriptures. When they had drunk the fragrant tea old Mr. Chen said,

"Venerable gentlemen, may I offer you some wine?"

"As a monk I do not drink," replied Sanzang, "but my disciples may drink a few cups." The old man was delighted.

"Bring vegetarian food," he ordered, "and warm some wine to keep the cold out of these gentlemen." Servants then carried out tables that were set round the brazier. They all drank several cups with the two elderly neighbors, then everything was tidied away.

By now it was getting late, and the visitors were invited back into the hall for an evening meal. They could hear passers–by in the street saying, "Oh! It's cold today. The River of Heaven is frozen solid."

"That's terrible," said Sanzang to Brother Monkey. "The river's frozen."

"In a sudden cold snap like this I think that only the shallow water near the bank can have frozen," said old Mr. Chen. Then another

passer—by said, "The whole 250 miles of it are frozen as smooth as a mirror, and some people are setting out across it from where the road ends." Hearing that people were walking across, Sanzang wanted to go out and take a look. "Do not be in such a hurry, venerable sir," said old Mr. Chen. "It's late now. Wait till morning." He then said good—bye to the two elderly neighbors, and after supper the visitors slept in the side room once more.

Pig rose at dawn and said, "Brother, it was even colder last night. I think the river really must have frozen solid." Sanzang went to the door, bowed low to Heaven, and prayed, "All you gods who protect the teachings, on my journey West I have faithfully worshipped the Buddha and crossed many a river and mountain with great suffering and never a word of complaint. I am deeply grateful for Heaven's help in bringing me this far, and I also give most humble thanks that the river has now frozen. When I bring the scriptures back I shall report all this to the Tang Emperor and reward you sincerely." When he had finished his prayer he told Friar Sand to saddle the horse so that they could cross the river while it was frozen. "Please do not be in such a hurry," said old Mr. Chen. "Stay here a few more days until the ice has melted and I shall arrange for a boat to carry you across."

"I don't know whether we should go or stay," said Friar Sand. "You can't rely on what people say, and you can only believe what you see with your own eyes. I'll saddle the horse and you can take a look for yourself."

"A good suggestion," said old Mr. Chen. "Servants," he ordered, "saddle six of our horses, but not the Tang Priest's horse."

Then with six young pages in attendance they went in line to the bank of the river to look. Indeed: The snow is piled up like mountains,

When the clouds disappear the dawn is bright.

A thousand pinnacles soar above the ice—locked pass;

Frozen rivers and lakes are completely smooth.

The North wind chills to the bone,

The slippery ice is bitterly cold.

The fish stay by the plants in the pond,

The wild birds linger in the stubble.

Beyond the frontier fingers are lost to frostbite;

The boatman on the river breaks his teeth with shivering.

Snakes' stomachs split,

Birds' legs break:

The ice forms mountains thousands of feet high.

The flowing silver stops in ten thousand valleys;

Cold is the river's liquid jade.

The East produces frozen silkworms,

And mice make their holes in the Northern ice.

Wang Xiang lay on the ice to melt it

And caught a carp for his mother to eat.

When the Emperor Guangwu crossed the river

A bridge of ice formed overnight for him.

Many are the layers of ice on the pond,

And the deep pool is frozen solid.

There are no more waves on the mighty River of Heaven;

The gleaming ice stretches out as hard as a road.

When Sanzang and his party reached the bank of the river they reined in their horses to look and saw that there really were people setting

out from where the road reached the bank. "Benefactor," asked Sanzang,

"where are those people going to across the ice?"

"On the other side of the river," said old Mr. Chen, "is the Womanland of Western Liang. Those people are all traders. What costs a hundred cash on this side can be worth ten thousand over there and vice versa, and it's because such big profits can be made for such a small expenditure that people risk their lives to go there.

Normally they form groups of five to a dozen or so and sail across, but now that the river has frozen over they are prepared to walk over at mortal peril."

"Fame and profit are what make the world go round," said Sanzang. "They are risking their lives for profit, and my disciples loyally obey orders for the sake of fame: there's not much to choose between them." He then told Monkey to go back to their benefactors' house, pack the luggage, and bridle and saddle the horse so that they could head West while the ice held. Monkey agreed with a chuckle.

"Master," said Friar Sand, "there's a saying that goes, 'For a thousand days you need a thousand pints of rice.'

Now that we are staying at the Chen house why don't we wait here a few days longer till the skies have cleared and the ice melted then get a boat to take us across? Rushing like this will only lead to trouble."

"Wujing," Sanzang replied, "how can you be so stupid? If it were March and the weather were warming up every day we could wait for it to thaw. But now it is September and it is getting cooler very day, so it would be absurd to wait for the thaw. It would set our journey a long time back."

"Stop all that idle chatter," said Pig, jumping down from his horse. "I'm going to find out how thick the ice is."

"You idiot," said Monkey, "you could test the depth of the water the other evening by throwing a stone into it, but you could never do that now that the ice is so thick."

"What you don't understand, brother," said Pig, "is that I can hit it with my rake. If I smash through it, it's too thin for us to walk on; but if I don't move it at all that'll show it's thick enough for us to cross."

"What you say is right," observed Sanzang. The idiot hitched up his clothes, strode to the edge of the river, raised his rake with both hands, and brought it down with all his might. There was a hollow thump as nine white scars appeared on the ice. His hand had been painfully jarred.

"We can go," said the idiot with a grin, "we can go. It's frozen solid right down to the bottom."

The news delighted Sanzang, who took them all back to the Chen house and told them to prepare to travel.

Seeing that repeated pleas were not going to make their visitors stay the two old men gave them some dry cooked grain, buns and steamed bread. The whole household kowtowed to the monks in respect then carried out a tray of silver and gold pieces and knelt before them. "We are so grateful to you gentlemen for saving the lives of our children that we would like to offer you this towards the cost of a meal on the journey."

Chapter 48

675

Journey to the West

Sanzang shook his head and waved his hand as he refused to accept it. "I am a monk," he said, "and what would I want with money? I would never be able to produce it on the journey. We have to beg for what we eat. The food you have given us will be plenty." When the old men repeatedly implored them to accept it Monkey took just under half an ounce of it between his fingers that he handed to Sanzang with the words,

"Master, accept this offering so as not to be ungrateful to the two old gentlemen."

Only then did they take their leave. Once the horse's hoofs slipped on the ice at the edge of the river, so that Sanzang almost fell of.

"It's hard going, Master," said Friar Sand.

"Wait," said Pig. "Ask old Mr. Chen for some rice straw."

"What for?" Brother Monkey asked.

"You wouldn't know," said Pig. "If you wrap rice straw round the horse's hoofs it won't slip and the master won't fall off." When old Mr. Chen heard this from the bank he at once sent someone back to fetch a bundle of rice straw from the house, then invited Sanzang to dismount while Pig wrapped the straw round the horse's hoofs, after which they set out across the ice.

When they had taken their leave of the old Chen brothers and gone a mile or so from the bank Pig handed the nine–ringed monastic staff to Sanzang.

"Master," he said, "hold this staff sticking out sideways as you ride."

"You idiot," said Monkey, "you're trying another dirty trick. You're meant to be carrying the staff, so why are you giving it to the master to carry?"

"You've never walked across ice," said Pig, "so you wouldn't know that there are always crevasses. Step on one and you'll go in. If you don't have something like a carrying–pole sticking out sideways then you'll fall into the water and have no more chance of climbing out that if you were in a big pot with a lid on it. You've got to have a prop like this to be safe."

"This idiot must have years of experience of walking on ice," thought Monkey, smiling to himself, and they took Pig's advice: the venerable elder held his monastic staff sideways, Monkey his iron cudgel, Friar Sand his demon–quelling staff and Pig, who had the luggage on a carrying–pole over his shoulder, held his rake sideways at waist height. Thus master and disciples pressed ahead without worry until nightfall, when they ate some of their dry rations. Not daring to delay, they hurried on over the ice that glistened and reflected the light of the moon and the stars across its white expanses. The horse never rested for a moment nor did master and disciples close their eyes as they kept going all night. They ate some more dry rations at dawn and pressed on towards the West.

As they were walking they heard a loud creaking noise from under the ice which so frightened the white horse that it almost fell over. "Disciples," asked Sanzang with horror, "what was that noise?"

"The river has frozen so solid that it's made the earth rumble," said Pig. "Or perhaps the river's frozen right to the bottom here in the middle." Half reassured but still half terrified, Sanzang whipped the horse forward and they carried on.

Since coming back to his watery palace the evil monster had been waiting under the ice with all his spirits for a long time. As soon as he heard the horse's hoofs he used his magic to make the ice burst noisily open, giving Monkey such a fright that he sprang up into mid－air. The other three and the white horse sank into the water, where the evil monster captured Sanzang and took him back to his underwater palace with all his spirits.

"Where is my sister the mandarin fish?" he shouted stridently, at which she came forward, did obeisance, and said, "Your Majesty, I am not worthy to be your sister."

"How can you say such a thing, good sister?" the monster replied. "Once a word is spoken a four－horse chariot can't bring it back. I said that if I caught the Tang Priest by following your plan I would take you as my sworn sister. Today your plan has proved itself to have been a superb one and the Tang Priest has been caught. I could not possibly go back on my word. Little ones," he ordered his underlings, "bring a table, whet a sharp knife, open this monk up, cut out his heart, skin him, and slice up his flesh. I also want music played while I share him with my sister and we both obtain eternal life."

"Your Majesty," said the mandarin fish, "don't eat him yet. His disciples may make trouble if they come here searching for him. It would be better to wait a couple of days until we know those damned wretches won't come looking for him before we cut him up. Then Your Majesty will sit in the place of honour while we, your kinsfolk, play music, sing and dance around you and wait on you; and you will be able to take your pleasure at your ease. Wouldn't that be best?" The monster accepted the suggestion and had Sanzang stored away in a six－foot－long stone chest behind the palace.

Pig and Friar Sand meanwhile recovered the luggage in the river, loaded it on the back of the white horse, and swam up through the waves as they parted the waters. When Monkey saw them from up in the air he asked,

"Where's the master?"

"He's not the Tang Priest now," said Pig. "He's the Drowned Priest. We

can't find him anywhere, so let's go back ashore and decide what to do." Now Pig was a mortal incarnation of Marshal Tian Peng who had once commanded eighty thousand sailors on the Heavenly River in the sky, Friar Sand had come from the Flowing Sands River, and the white horse was the grandson of the Dragon King of the Western Ocean, so they were all good swimmers. With the Great Sage showing them the way from mid–air they were soon back at the Eastern bank, where they dried and brushed the horse and wrung out their clothes.

Monkey then landed his cloud, and they went back together to the Chen household, where a messenger had already reported that only three of the four venerable gentlemen who were going to fetch the scriptures were now returning. The two aged brothers hurried outside to meet them.

"Gentlemen," they said, seeing their wet clothes, "we tried so hard to persuade you to stay longer, and look what has come of your refusal. Where is the venerable Tang Priest?"

"He isn't the Tang Priest any more," said Pig. "He's the Drowned Priest."

"Alas, alas," said the aged brothers, bursting into tears. "We said that you should wait until the snow had melted and we could send you all across in a boat, but he refused to agree, and now he's dead."

"Old men," said Monkey, "don't upset yourselves over your friend. I can assure you that the master will not die. I'm certain that the Great King of Miraculous Response has captured him by magic. So stop worrying, have our clothes washed and starched, our passport dried out, and the white horse fed. My brothers and I will find the damned creature, rescue the master, and wipe this evil monster out. Then he'll give you village no more trouble and you will, I hope, have a safe and peaceful future." Old Mr. Chen, greatly encouraged to hear this, ordered a vegetarian meal to be provided.

Chapter 48

The three brothers ate their fill, handed the horse and the luggage over to the care of the Chen household, got their weapons ready, and hurried off to find their master and catch the monster. Indeed: The true nature was harmed by treading on the ice;

How could they be complete without the Cinnabar?

If you do not know how they rescued the Tang Priest listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 49

Sanzang's Great Misfortune Is to Fall into the River

Guanyin's Fish Basket Saves the Tang Priest

The story tells how the Great Sage Monkey took his leave of the old Chen brothers, went with Pig and Friar Sand to the bank of the river, and told the two of them to decide which of them would go into the water first.

"Brother," said Pig, "you should go first; neither of us two has very special powers."

"To be frank with you, brother," replied Monkey. "I wouldn't need any help from either of you in dealing with mountain spirits, but I can't cope in the water. If I go into rivers or seas I have to make hand spells to keep the water away, or else change into something like a fish or a crab. But if I'm making a hand spell I can't get a good swing with my cudgel, use my powers, or kill evil spirits. I asked you two to go in because I've long known that you're both good swimmers."

"Brother," said Friar Sand, "I'll go, but I don't know what we'll find at the bottom of the river. I think we should all go. You should turn yourself into something or else let me carry you through the water to find the monster's den. You go first and discover what's been happening. If the master hasn't been hurt and is still there we can do our best to attack the monster. But if the monster has used magic on the master and he's has been drowned or eaten there will be no point in searching too hard; we'd better find something else to do instead."

"You're right, brother," said Monkey. "Which of you will carry me?"

"Pig was secretly delighted at this question. "Goodness only knows how many times that ape has put one over on me," he thought. "As he can't swim I'll carry him and put one over on him this time."

"Brother," he said, chuckling, "I'll carry you." Realizing that Pig was up to something Monkey decided to beat him at his own game and replied, "Very well, you're stronger than Friar Sand." Pig then took Monkey on his back.

Friar Sand parted a way through the waters of the River of Heaven for the brother – disciples. When they had covered thirty or forty miles on the riverbed the idiot made a grab for Monkey, who pulled out one of his hairs and turned it into a double of himself that he put on Pig's back, while changing his real self into a pig louse that clung firmly to the idiot's ear. Pig suddenly stumbled as he walked along, threw Monkey forward and made him fall. Now as the double was only a hair transformed it floated up and disappeared.

Chapter 49

"Brother," said Friar Sand to Pig, "what are you doing? Why have you fallen over in the mud instead of walking along properly? And even if you have to do that, where have you dropped Monkey?"

"He couldn't stop himself falling," Pig replied, "and he's vanished. Never mind whether he's alive or dead. We two will go and find the master."

"No," said Friar Sand, "we need him. He's no swimmer but he's cleverer than us. If he not coming I won't go with you." Monkey could restrain himself no longer.

"Pig!" he shouted at the top of his voice from inside the ear. "I'm here."

When Friar Sand heard this he said with a laugh, "That's done it. You're the one that's had it, you idiot. You had a nerve, trying to put one over on him. What are we going to do now? We can hear him but he's disappeared."

Pig knelt in the mud and started to kowtow desperately, saying, "I did wrong, brother, I did wrong. When we've rescued the master I'll apologize to you properly on shore. Where did you talk to us from? You scared me to death. Please, please turn back into yourself. I'll carry you, and I promise not to knock you about any more."

"You've been carrying me all the time," said Monkey. "I won't play any tricks on you. Now, get going, and fast." The idiot staggered to his feet still mumbling apologies and pressed on with Friar Sand.

After another thirty or forty miles they looked up to see a tall building on which was written in large letters RESIDENCE OF THE RIVER

TURTLE. "This must be where the monster lives," said Friar Sand. "We two can't go up to the doors and challenge him to battle without finding out how things stand."

"Wujing," said Brother Monkey to Friar Sand, "is there water inside and outside the door?"

"No," said Friar Sand. "In that case you two hide near here while I take a look round," said Monkey.

The splendid Great Sage climbed out of Pig's ear, shook himself, turned into a female shrimp with long legs, and reached the doors with two or three jumps. When he took a good look around he saw the monster sitting up above the door with all his watery tribe drawn up around him and the female mandarin fish sitting at his side. They were all discussing how to eat the Tang Priest. Monkey looked carefully around but could see the master nowhere. Then he noticed another female shrimp coming over and standing in the portico to the West.

Monkey leapt forward and called, "Sister—in—law, where is this Tang Priest that His Majesty and everyone else are talking about eating?"

"His Majesty caught him yesterday when he made all that snow and ice," the female shrimp replied. "He's now in a stone chest behind the palace. If his disciples don't come here to make trouble we'll have music and feast on him tomorrow."

When Monkey heard this he kept up his act for a little longer then went straight round to the back of the palace where he found a stone chest just like a stone pig—trough in a sty or a stone coffin. He measured it, found that it was six feet long, lay on it and listened. He could hear Sanzang sobbing inside. Monkey said nothing but put his ear against the lid, listened more carefully, and could make out Sanzang gnashing his teeth and saying amid moans,

"If only my fate had not always been so bad:

Disasters in rivers all my life have I had.

Soon after I was born I was floated on the water,

And now that have I drowned never I will not see Lord Buddha.

Not so long ago the Black River made me weep,

And now the breaking ice has consigned me to the deep.

I wonder if at any time my followers will come

To let me fetch the scriptures and complete my journey home."

Monkey could not restrain himself from calling to him, "Master, don't be so upset about troubles by water. As the Classic of Water Disaster has it, 'Earth is the mother of the Five Elements, and water is their origin.

Without earth there can be no life, and without water there can be no growth.' I'm here."

"Save me, disciple," said Sanzang, hearing Monkey's voice.

"Don't worry," said Monkey, "I promise we'll save you when we've captured the monster."

"Act fast," said Sanzang. "If I'm here for another day I'll die of suffocation."

"No problem," said Monkey, "no problem. I'm off." He turned, sprang out through the main doors, turned back into himself, and called for Pig.

"What's happening?" asked the idiot and Friar Sand as they came up to him.

"The monster caught the master with that trick," Monkey replied. "He's unhurt, but the monster has put him inside a stone chest. You two challenge the monster to battle at once while I get out of the water. Capture him if you can, and if you can't then pretend to be beaten and lure him out of the water for me to kill."

"Out you go, brother, and don't worry," said Friar Sand. "We'll find out what the monster's really like."

Monkey then made a water–averting spell with his hands, shot up through the waves, and stood on the bank to wait.

Watch while Pig charges at the doors in a murderous mood yelling, "Damned monster, give us our master back."

The little devils inside the doors rushed back in panic to report, "Your Majesty, there are people outside asking for their master."

"It must be those bloody monks here," said the monster. "Fetch my armor and weapons at once." The little devils ran to fetch them, and when the monster was in his armor and holding his weapons in his hand he ordered that the doors be opened. As he came out Pig and Friar Sand, who were standing one to each side, could see how he was dressed and equipped. He was a fine monster. Just look: Chapter 49

On his head a gleaming helmet of gold,

On his body golden armor that made a rainbow.

His belt was studded thick with pearls and jade;

The strange boots on his feet were of smoky yellow leather.

His nose was as high as a mountain ridge,

His brow as majestically broad as a dragon's.

Fierce and round were his eyes that flashed,

Spikes of steel were his sharp, neat teeth.

His short, matted hair seemed to be ablaze,

And his long whiskers bristled like golden spikes.

In his mouth he was chewing a tender reed

While he wielded a nine-knobbed mace of copper.

The noise when the doors were opened wide

Rivaled the crashing of thunder in spring.

Few such could be seen in the world of mortals:

The Great King truly deserves his title.

The evil spirit came outside accompanied by a hundred or more of his little devils, who brandished their swords and spears as they formed themselves up into two companies. "Where are you from, monks," he asked Pig, "and why are you making this horrible noise here?"

"You got away before, but I'll get you now, damned monster," Pig shouted back. "Stop pretending you don't know who I am — —we've had words already. I'm a disciple of the holy priest from the Great Tang who's going to worship the Buddha and collect the scriptures in the Western Heaven. You and your little tricks, calling yourself the Great King of Miraculous Response, and eating boys and girls in Chen Village. Can't you recognize me? I was the Chen family's little girl, Pan of Gold."

"Monk," said the monster, "you're a disgrace. You deserve to be punished for fraudulent impersonation if you turned yourself into that girl. You wounded the back of my hand although I never ate you. I let you off that time, so why have you come to my front door looking for me?"

"What do you mean, let me off?" said Pig. "You made that cold wind and the snow, froze the river, and are going to kill the master. As soon as you give him back there'll be no more trouble, but if you so much as start to say no you'll get it from this rake of mine, and it'll show you no mercy."

The evil spirit's response to this was a mocking laugh. "That's fancy talk, monk," he said, "but it's a load of nonsense, except that I did make the cold, the snow and the ice and I have captured your master. You may think you can get him back by coming here and shouting, but this time things are different. Last time I was unarmed as I was going to a banquet, which was why you took me by surprise and wounded me. This time I'll fight three rounds with you if you don't make yourself scarce. If you're a match for me I'll give you back your master, but if you're not, you'll be eaten too."

"What a good little boy," said Pig. "Just what I expected to hear from you. Watch out for my rake!"

"So you only became a monk in middle life," said the monster.

"You really do have some miraculous responsiveness, my boy," Pig replied. "How did you know that?"

"If you fight with a rake that must mean you used to be a hired hand in a vegetable garden and stole it," said the monster.

"My boy," said Pig, "this isn't a farming rake. Just look at it: Its mighty prongs are like dragon claws

Set with gold in the from of serpents.

In battle with a foe it makes cold winds

Till it gives off flames in a longer fight.

It kills off demons for the holy priest

Subduing evil spirits on the journey West.

When it stirs up clouds it bolts out sun and moon,

Making the colours of sunset brightly shine.

It could knock down Mount Tai, to the terror of the tigers,

Turn the oceans upside down, alarming all the dragons.

I could spare you for the sake of your mighty powers,

But if I struck you with the rake it would make nine holes."

Chapter 49

Refusing to believe this the monster raised his copper mace and struck at Pig's head. Pig parried the blow with his rake and said, "Damn you, you're just an evil creature turned spirit in middle life."

"How can you tell that?" the monster asked.

"As you fight with a mace I think you must have worked as a furnace −man for a silversmith, got your hands on that hammer, and stolen it," Pig replied.

"It's no silversmith's hammer," the monster said. "Look at it: Its nine

knobs all are like the buds of flowers

Growing on a sprig of an evergreen plant.

This never was a product of the earthly world,

For it came from the gardens of immortal beings.

Its green and purple fruit matured by the Jade Pool;

Its pure fragrance was formed beside the Nephrite Pond.

Because I worked and tempered it with diligence and skill

It now is hard as steel and miraculously sharp.

Spears, swords and halberds are not its worthy rivals;

Battleaxe and partisan do not dare approach.

No matter how sharp are the prongs of your rake,

If they touch my hammer they'll bend and they'll break."

This conversation between the two of them was too much for Friar Sand, who came forward and said,

"Monster, stop all that empty talk. As the saying goes, actions speak louder than words. Wait there and see how you like my staff."

The monster parried it with his mace and replied, "You're another one who became a monk in middle life."

"How can you tell?" Friar Sand asked.

"From the look of you you must have been a miller before," the monster replied.

"What makes you think that?" Friar Sand asked.

"Why would you fight with a noodle–making pole if you weren't a miller?" the monster asked.

"You evil thing," said Friar Sand, "What you can't see is that Few are the weapons like this one in the world

Which is why you do not know what this staff of mine is called.

It grew in a shadeless part of the moon,

Was shaped from the trunk of a Sala – tree.

The jewels set around it shine with many colours,

And solid is the blessing that is packed inside.

Once it was present at the Jade Emperor's banquets

Now it protects the priest from the Tang.

On this road to the West it is utterly unknown,

But great is its fame in the palaces of Heaven.

It is known as the precious demon – quelling staff,

And with a single blow it could pulverize your brow."

The evil spirit allowed no more arguments and the three of them now became deadly foes. They fought a fine battle under the water:

Mace, staff and rake,

Wuneng and Wujing against the monster.

One was Marshal Tian Peng come to earth,

One a great general down from Heaven.

Both showed their prowess in attacking the water monster,

Who put up a good fight against the heavenly monks.

They had the good fortune to complete the great Way,

Overcoming each other in an endless sequence.

Journey to the West

Earth defeated water;

When water was dried out the river – bed showed.

Water gave birth to wood,

Which blossomed when it was growing well.

Dhyana and meditation were all the same;

Refining cinnabar and alchemy submitted to the Three Schools,

Earth was the mother,

Yielding sprouts of metal,

And metal yielded the liquid that gave birth to the babe.

Water was the root

That nurtured wood's flourishing,

Which rivaled in its glory the glow of sunset.

Because the elements were crowded together

They all turned hostile and started to fight.:

See how bright are the nine knobs on the mace

While the staff is decorated with many – coloured silks.

The rake crushed positive and negative,

Divided the Nine Bright Shiners,

And swung in a tangle without any order.

They were ready to die to save the Tang Priest,

Prepared to give their lives for Sakyamuni Buddha.

They kept the mace of copper busy without respite

Parrying the blows of the staff and the rake.

When the three of them had been fighting under the water for four full hours without either side emerging as victor Pig realized that they were not going to beat the monster and gave Friar Sand a nod. Pretending that they were beaten, the two of them turned and fled, trailing their weapons behind them.

Chapter 49

685

Journey to the West

"Hold your ground here, little ones," said the monster to his underlings, "while I go after those wretches.

When I catch those damned monks I'll bring them back for you all to eat." Watch him as he emerges above the water in pursuit of the two of them like the wind driving fallen leaves or a rainstorm beating down withered blossoms.

Monkey meanwhile had been standing on the bank watching the water with unwavering eyes. Suddenly he saw the waves thrown into turmoil as with a great roar Pig leapt ashore.

"He's coming," he said, "he's coming."

Next Friar Sand reached the bank saying, "He's coming, he's coming."

Then came the monster after them shouting, "Where've you gone?"

No sooner had his head come into view than Monkey struck with his cudgel, shouting, "Take that!" The evil spirit swerved to avoid it then parried with his copped mace. While the one stirred up the waves in the river the other showed his prowess on the shore. Before three rounds of the fight had been fought the monster, unable to keep up his resistance, did a feint and plunged back into the water, whereupon the wind fell and the waves subsided.

"Thank you, brothers," said Monkey, going back up the high bank.

"Brother," said Friar Sand, "you may not think that monster is up to much on the shore, but he's a real terror underwater. Pig and I attacking together were only as good as him alone. How are we going to deal with him and rescue the master?"

"We've no time to lose," said Monkey. "He may kill the master."

"I'll trick him into coming out," said Pig. "You wait up in the air and say nothing at all. When you reckon his head is above the water, hit him a good hard one on the forehead from upside – down. Even if that doesn't kill him his head will ache and he'll feel faint. When I catch him one with my rake that'll settle his score."

"Good idea," said Monkey, "good idea. That's what they call a coordinated attack, and it will do the trick."

The two of them went back into the water.

The evil monster fled to his palace in defeat, where the other demons greeted him and the mandarin fish asked, "Where did Your Majesty chase those two monks to?"

"They have an accomplice," the monster replied. "When they jumped ashore he swung an iron cudgel at me. I dodged it and fought back. Goodness only know how heavy that cudgel is: I couldn't keep it off me with my mace. He sent me back here beaten in less than three rounds."

"Can you remember what their accomplice looks like, Your Majesty?" the mandarin fish asked.

"He's a monk with a hairy face that looks like a thunder god's," the monster replied, "pointed ears, a broken nose, and fiery eyes with golden pupils." At this the mandarin fish shuddered.

"Thank goodness Your Majesty could see how good a fighter he was and ran away," she said. "You would never have survived another three rounds. I know who that monk is."

Chapter 49

"Who is he then?" the monster asked.

"When I was in the Eastern Ocean many years ago I once heard the old dragon king talk of his fame. He's the Handsome Monkey King, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who made himself into a golden Immortal of the Supreme Monad and made havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago. Now he has submitted to the Buddha's teachings, changed his name to Sun Wukong the Novice, and is protecting the

Tang Priest on his journey to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures. He has enormous divine powers and can do all sorts of transformations. Your Majesty, you must not provoke him or have any more fights with him."

Before these remarks were out of her mouth the little devils from by the door came back to report, "Your Majesty, those two monks are back here challenging you to battle again."

"Good sister," said the monster, "you are very wise. I won't go out, but I'll see what happens." He sent this urgent order: "Little ones, shut the doors firmly. As they say, You can stand outside and roar,

But we won't unlock the door.

They can hang around for a couple of days, and when they can't take any more and go away we'll feast on the Tang Priest at our ease."

The little demons piled up rocks and made a clay cement to seal the doors firmly shut. When the repeated shouts of Pig and Friar Sand failed to bring the monster out the idiot lost his patience and started to smash the doors with his rake, but they were so firmly barricaded that even though he broke up the doors themselves with seven or eight blows there were still so many layers of clay and rocks behind them that he had no hope of getting through.

"Brother," said Friar Sand when he saw this, "that demon is so scared that he's barricaded his doors and won't come out. We'd better go back to the shore and discuss it with Monkey." Pig agreed and they returned to the Eastern bank.

When Monkey, who was waiting up in the mist and clouds with his cudgel in his hand, saw the two of them emerge with no demon after them he landed his cloud on the bank to meet them. "Brothers," he asked, "why haven't you brought him up with you?"

"The monster has barricaded his doors and won't show himself," said Friar Sand. "When Brother Pig smashed his doors down he saw that the doorway was strongly blocked up with clay and rocks, and as we can't fight him we've come back to discuss with you some other way of saving the master."

"It sounds hopeless," said Monkey. "You two patrol the bank and don't let the monster escape while I'm away."

"Where are you going, brother?" asked Pig.

"I'm going to Potaraka to call on the Bodhisattva," Monkey replied, "and find out about the monster's name and background. When I've found his ancestral home and captured his relations and neighbors I'll come back Chapter 49

to get him and rescue the master."

"But doing all that will be too much trouble and take far too long," laughed Pig. "I assure you it won't take any time or trouble," replied Brother Monkey. "I'll soon be back."

The splendid Great Sage set off from the river bank at high speed on his auspicious cloud and headed for the Southern Sea. Within an hour Potaraka Island was in view, and he landed the cloud on Pota Cliff, where the twenty–four devas, the guardian god of the island, Moksa the Novice, the boy Sudhana, and the Naga Maiden Pengzhu all came forward to bow in greeting and ask, "Why have you come, Great Sage?"

"There is something about which I would like to see the Bodhisattva," Monkey replied.

"The Bodhisattva left her cave this morning to go to her bamboo grove," the devas replied. "She allowed nobody to accompany her, but as she knew that you would be coming today she told us to wait here to greet you. Since you will not be able to see her at once would you please sit under the Turquoise Cliff until the Bodhisattva comes out and decides what to do."

Brother Monkey did as they suggested, but before he had sat down the page Sudhana came up to him and said with a bow, "Great Sage Sun, thanks to you earlier kindness the Bodhisattva deigned to keep me. I never leave her side, and am always at the foot of her lotus throne. She has been very good to me." Monkey, who knew that he had previously been the Red Boy, laughed as he said, "You were so confused by evil then that you only realize I'm a good person now you've been converted."

When he had been waiting for a long time but the Bodhisattva had still not appeared Monkey said anxiously.

"Will you please report that I'm here? Time's being lost, and I'm

worried that my master may be killed."

"We would not dare," the devas replied. "The Bodhisattva told us to wait till she came herself." Monkey, who was much too impatient to wait a moment longer, rushed inside.

The Handsome Monkey King

Was impatient and very snide.

The devas could not hold him back,

When he wanted to go inside.

He strode deep into the grove,

Eyes wide as he peered around.

He saw the Saviour sitting on

Bamboo leaves on the ground.

She was not washed or combed,

And her face was free of care.

There were no tassels to hold in place

The silken strands of her hair.

She did not wear her plain blue robe,

But only a clinging vest,

A skirt of brocade round her waist,

And both arms left undressed.

There was no shawl for her shoulders;

On her foot she wore no shoe.

Her jade hand held a knife of steel

With which she peeled bamboo.

When Monkey saw her he could not restrain himself from shouting, "Bodhisattva, your disciple Sun Wukong offers his pious respects."

"Wait outside," said the Bodhisattva.

"Bodhisattva," Monkey replied, "my master is in trouble and I have come to inquire respectfully about the background of the evil monster in the River of Heaven."

"Get out," said the Bodhisattva, "and wait till I come out."

Not daring to push his demands any harder, Monkey had to leave the bamboo grove and say to all the devas,

"The Bodhisattva seems to be spring cleaning. Why is she cutting strips of bamboo in the grove, and not properly dressed, instead of sitting on her lotus throne?"

"We don't know," said the devas. "She left the cave and went into the grove this morning before dressing, telling us to receive you here. It must be something to do with you, Great Sage." Monkey could do nothing but wait.

Before long the Bodhisattva emerged from the grove carrying a basket made from purple bamboo. "Wukong,"

she said, "you and I are going to rescue the Tang Priest."

Monkey fell to his knees and replied, "Your disciple has the temerity to suggest that you should dress and take your seat on your lotus throne."

"There will be no need to dress; I shall go as I am," the Bodhisattva replied, after which she dismissed the devas and set off on an auspicious cloud. Monkey could only follow.

In a moment they were on the banks of the River of Heaven. When Pig

and Friar Sand saw them they said to each other, "That brother of ours is too impatient. Goodness only knows what sort of row he must have made in the Southern Sea to make the Bodhisattva come rushing here before she was even properly dressed." Before these words were out of their mouths Guanyin reached the bank, and the two of them bowed low to her saying, "Bodhisattva, we shouldn't have done it, we were wrong, forgive us." The Bodhisattva undid the silken sash around her waistcoat, tied one end to the basket, and rose on a coloured cloud.

Holding the other end of the sash she threw the basket into the river then pulled it up through the current, reciting, "Die if you go, live if you stay, die if you go, live if you stay." When she had said this seven times she raised the basket again, and this time it contained a glistening goldfish, blinking its eyes and moving its scales. "Wukong," said the Bodhisattva, "go down into the water and rescue your master."

"How can I?" Monkey said. "The monster hasn't been caught yet."

"Isn't that him in the basket?" the Bodhisattva asked.

Pig and Friar Sand then bowed low and asked, "How could that fish have had such great powers?"

"It originally was a goldfish that I raised in my lotus pool," the Bodhisattva replied. "Every day it would swim up to listen to sutras, and it trained itself to have magic powers. The nine-knobbed copper mace was an unopened lotus bud that it tempered and made into a weapon. One day, I do not know when, a high tide reached the pool and carried it here. When I was leaning on the balustrade looking at the lotuses this morning I noticed that the wretch had not come to pay his respects, so I examined my fingers and the palms of my hands and worked out that it must have become a spirit and be planning to kill your master. That was why I did not wait to dress before using my divine powers to weave a bamboo basket in which to catch him."

"In that case," said Monkey, "could you stay here a moment longer? We would like to let the faithful in Chen Village gaze upon your golden countenance, Bodhisattva. This would be a great kindness, and it would also teach common folk to believe and make offerings by showing them how that demon was subdued."

"Very well," said the Bodhisattva. "Call them here."

Pig and Friar Sand then ran to the village shouting, "Come and see the living Bodhisattva Guanyin, come and see the living Bodhisattva

Guanyin." All the villagers, young and old, men and women, rushed to the edge of the river and fell to their knees and kowtowed in worship despite the mud and the water. Among them was a good painter who left to posterity the painting of the Bodhisattva Guanyin appearing with a fish–basket. The Bodhisattva then returned to the Southern Sea.

Pig and Friar Sand cleared a way through the water straight to the River Turtle's Residence, where they searched for their master. All the water monsters and fish spirits there were now dead and rotten. They went round to the back of the palace, opened the stone chest, carried the Tang Priest up out of the water, and showed him to the crowds.

The Chen brothers kowtowed and expressed their thanks, saying, "My lord, if only you had accepted our advice and stayed longer you would have been spared all this trouble."

"Say no more about it," replied Monkey. "From next year onwards you people here won't need to make any more sacrifices. The Great King has been removed, and will never do you any harm again. Old Mr. Chen, I'd now like to trouble you to find a boat as soon as you can to take us across the river."

"Yes, I can, I can," said Chen Qing, ordering people to saw wood into planks to build a boat.

When his retainers heard this they were all delighted to make offerings, and there were many cries of "I'll pay for the mast and the sail," "I'll fix the oars," "I'll provide the rigging," and "I'll hire the boatmen."

Amid all the noisy yelling on the bank a great shout came from the river, "Great Sage Sun, don't waste other people's money building a boat. I shall carry you all, master and disciples, across the river." When the crowd heard this they were all terrified. The more timid among them slipped home, while the bolder stayed to watch, shivering and shaking. A moment later a monster emerged from the water. This is what it was like: A divine square–headed and extraordinary beast,

The miraculous creature, the immortal of the waters.

Wagging his tail he can live for many an age,

Hiding still and silent in the depths of the rivers.

Leaping through the waves he rushes to the bank,

Or lies beside the sea facing sun and wind.

He has mastered the true Way of nourishing his essence,

The Ancient Soft—shelled Turtle with his carapace of white.

"Great Sage," called the Ancient Soft—shelled Turtle, "don't have a boat built. I'll take you four across."

"I'll get you, you evil beast," said Monkey, swinging his iron cudgel. "Come to the bank and I'll kill you with this."

"I am grateful to you, Great Sage, and have offered in good faith to carry you master and you disciples across the river, so why do you want to kill me?" the monster asked.

"What good turn have I ever done you?" Brother Monkey asked.

"Great Sage," said the Soft—shelled Turtle, "you may not realize that the River Turtle's Residence at the bottom of the river is my home, which was handed down to me by many generations of ancestors. Because I acquired awareness of the fundamental and developed a divine spirit by cultivating my conduct I had my ancestral home rebuilt as the River Turtle's Residence. Nine years ago, on a day when the sea was roaring and the waves were crashing, that evil monster came here on the tide and used his power to make a vicious attack on me. He killed many of my children and captured many of my clan. As I was no match for him I had to let him take my home for nothing. Now that you have come to rescue the Tang Priest, Great Sage, and have Chapter 49

asked the Bodhisattva Guanyin here to sweep away evil and capture the monster my house has been returned to me and my family reunited. We can now live in our old home instead of having to make mud shelters. That is why my gratitude to you is as great as a

mountain and as deep as the sea. And it is not only my family that is grateful. The whole village will now be spared from the annual sacrifice, and the sons and daughters of many a family will be spared. You have indeed brought double benefits with a single action, and that kindness is one that I have to repay."

Monkey's heart was warmed to hear this, so he put his cudgel away and asked, "Is all that really true?"

"How could I possibly lie to the Great Sage who has done me so very great a kindness?" the Ancient Soft–shelled Turtle asked.

"If it's the truth you must swear an oath to Heaven," Monkey said, whereupon the Ancient Soft–shelled Turtle opened his red mouth and swore to Heaven, "If I do not faithfully carry the Tang Priest across the River of Heaven may my whole body be turned to blood."

"Come ashore, come ashore," said Monkey with a smile. Only then did the Ancient soft–shelled Turtle approach the shore, give a jump, and climb up the bank. When they all went close they saw that he had a huge white shell about forty feet around.

"Master," said Monkey, "let's climb on his back and cross over."

"But, disciple," said Sanzang, "we could not get across that ice even though it was frozen so thick. I'm afraid that we would be even less safe on a turtle's back."

"Do not be afraid, Master," said the Ancient Soft–shelled Turtle. "I'm much safer than those thick layers of ice. I'll only fail in my spiritual endeavors if I roll to the side."

"Master," said Monkey, "no creature that can speak human language will tell a lie." He then told Pig and Friar Sand to lead the horse forward.

When they reached the banks everyone in the village came to see them off with deep bows. Monkey led the animal on to the turtle's white shell and asked the Tang Priest to stand to the horse's right, Pig to its left, and Friar Sand behind it while he stood in front. Just in case the Soft–shelled Turtle tried to misbehave, Monkey undid his belt of tiger sinew, threaded it through the turtle's nose, and held it like a halter. Then with one foot on the turtle's shell and one on its head, and with his iron cudgel in one hand and the halter in the other, he shouted, "Take it easy, Ancient Soft–shelled Turtle. One roll from you and I'll hit you on the head."

"I'd never dare, I'd never dare," the turtle said, and he started to walk across the water on his four feet as if going across dry land. All the people on the bank burnt incense, kowtowed, and recited, "Namo Amitabha Buddha." This had indeed been a case of a true arhat coming down to the mortal world, and the appearance of a living Bodhisattva. Everyone bowed, watched them until they could be seen no more, and then went home.

In less than a day the master rode the White Soft－shelled Turtle across the 250 miles of the River of Heaven and landed on the other side with hands and feet still dry. When he had climbed ashore Sanzang put his hands together in thanks, and said, "Ancient Soft －shelled Turtle, I have put you to a great effort but I have nothing I can give you. I shall have to express my gratitude when I come back with the scriptures."

"There is on need for any presents, venerable sir," said the turtle. "I hear that the Lord Buddha in the Western Heaven has gone beyond death and life and knows everything in the past and the future. I have been cultivating my conduct here for over 1,300 years, and although I have prolonged my life and learned human Chapter 49

speech I cannot escape from my shell. I beg you, venerable sir, to ask the Lord Buddha on my behalf when I will be rid of this shell and able to take human form.

"I shall ask, I shall ask," Sanzang promised, at which the Ancient Soft －shelled Turtle plunged back into the water and Monkey helped Sanzang to mount the horse. With Pig shouldering the luggage and Friar Sand walking alongside, master and disciples took the main trail West. Indeed: The emperor sent the priest on his journey to visit the Buddha; Great were the hardships and long was the road over river and hill.

Firm was his will and sincere was his heart: for him death held no terror.

The River of Heaven he crossed standing high on the old turtle's shell, If you don't know how much further they had to go, or what other terrible trials faced them, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 50

Feelings Run Wild and Nature Gets Loose Because of Desire

In Confusion of Spirit the Heart Is Disturbed and the Demon Encountered The poem goes:

The heart must be frequently swept,

The dust of emotions removed,

Lest the Buddha be trapped in the pit.

Only when the essence is pure

Can the origin then be discussed.

Trim the candle of nature,

Breathe in the way that Master Caoxi taught,

Control the ape and horse of the mind.

Only when breath is calm by day and night

Can one achieve the true adept's skill.

This poem is set to the tune *Nan Ke Zi* and it tells how the Tang Priest escaped disaster under the ice of the River of Heaven and crossed to the other bank on the shell of the white turtle. As the four pilgrims headed West it was now the depths of winter, but the mists in the forests were still light, and the bony shapes of the mountains could be seen rising in their purity above the waters. As master and disciples carried on along their way, they were obstructed by a big mountain. The road was rocky, and they and the horse found the going rough. Sanzang reined the horse in and called for his disciples.

Monkey led Pig and Friar Sand forward to stand in attendance and asked, "Master, what are your instructions?"

"You can see how high the mountain in front of us is," said Sanzang. "I

am worried that there may be tigers, wolves, monsters and demon beasts who will kill us. You must be very careful."

"Don't worry, Master," said Monkey. "We three brothers have got on very well together since we were converted to the pursuit of the truth. With our magic powers to put down demons and monsters we've got nothing to fear from tigers, wolves or demons." This greatly reassured Sanzang, who pressed ahead. When he reached the mouth of a gully and urged the horse up the slope he raised his head and saw that it was a splendid mountain:

Towering crags,

A steep and lofty range.

Towering crags pierced the heavens,

The steep and lofty range blocked out the azure shy.

Grotesque rocks were piled like sitting tigers,

Twisted, slanting pines seemed to fly like dragons,

Beautifully sang the birds on the ridge,

Heavy hung the scent of plum blossom by the scar.

Cold was the sluggish flow of the stream,

And menacing hung the dark clouds over the peak.

They saw whirling snow,

And an icy wind

Howling with the roar of hungry mountain tigers.

Chapter 50

Cold rooks could find no perches in the trees

And wild deer did not know the way back home.

Hard it was indeed for the traveler to make progress

As he frowned with worry and covered up his head.

The four of them were trembling in the cold and the snow as they crossed that high ridge and saw in a distant hollow high towers and elegant houses. "Disciples," said a relieved Sanzang from the back of his horse, "we have gone cold and hungry today, but there are many buildings in that hollow that I an sure must be a farm or a Buddhist or Taoist monastery. Let us go there and beg some food before we continue on our way."

Monkey's immediate response was to take a good look. He saw that evil – looking clouds and vapors hung over the place, so he turned back to the Tang Priest and said, "Master, that's a bad place."

"How could it possibly be a bad place with all those towers, pavilions and fine buildings?" Sanzang asked.

"You wouldn't know, Master," Monkey replied. "There are any number of evil spirits and monsters along this road to the West who are good at making buildings by magic. They can make anything from towers and houses to halls and pavilions, and all just as bait. As you know, one of the nine kinds of dragon is called the clam – dragon. Its breath comes out looking like fine buildings and pools. Clam – dragon buildings appear when there is a heavy mist over a great river. Birds flying by will perch on them for a rest. The clam – dragon eats everyone up, even if there are thousands of them. It's a really lethal trick. The atmosphere over there looks thoroughly vicious: whatever you do don't go there."

"Even if I may not I am still very hungry indeed," said Sanzang.

"Yes, Master, you really must be," replied Monkey. "Would you like to dismount and sit on this level ground here while I go somewhere else to beg food for you?" Sanzang followed this suggestion.

While Pig held the halter Friar Sand put the luggage down, opened up one of the bundles, and took out a begging bowl that he handed to Monkey, who gave him these parting instructions as he took it: "Don't go any further. Guard the master and make sure he stays sitting here until I come back with some food. Then we can carry on West."

Friar Sand promised to do so. Monkey then spoke to Sanzang again: "Master, this is a very dangerous place.

Whatever you do you mustn't move away from here. I'm off now to beg for food."

"No need to say any more," replied Sanzang. "Be back as soon as you can. I shall wait for you here."

Monkey turned and was about to go when he turned back to add, "Master, I know that you haven't the patience to sit still, but I'll make a spell to keep you safe here." With that he took out his gold–banded cudgel and in a flash he drew a circle on the ground with it. He asked the Tang priest to sit in the circle with Pig and Friar Sand standing on either side and the horse and luggage nearby.

Then he put his palms together and said to the Tang Priest, "The circle I've drawn is stronger than a wall of bronze or iron. No tiger, leopard, wolf, demon, fiend or monster will dare come anywhere near it. But you must not step outside it. I guarantee that you'll come to no harm as long as you sit inside the circle; but once Chapter 50

you leave it very nasty things will happen to you. Please, please, please stay inside it whatever happens."

Sanzang did as he was told and they all sat down. Only then did Monkey set off due South on his cloud to beg for some food. When he saw the ancient trees of another farmhouse reaching up to the sky he brought his cloud down for a closer look. This is what he saw:

Willows bent down by cruel snow,

A square pool frozen hard.

A few sparse bamboos waving green,

The turquoise of a lofty and elegant pine.

Thatched cottages that looked covered with silver,

A slanting bridge that seemed paved with flour.

Daffodils by the fence were beginning to open,

While icicles hung low beneath the eaves.

The icy wind carried many a strange fragrance;

The plum blossom was lost amid the driving snow.

As Monkey walked towards the farm to take a look at it he heard the creak of a wicker gate opening as an old man came out. He was leaning on a wooden stick and wearing a sheepskin hat, a tattered tunic, and rush sandals. He looked up to the sky and said. "The Northwest wind in blowing, so the sky will be clear tomorrow." Before the words were out of his mouth a Pekinese dog came bounding out from behind him and started barking wildly at Monkey. Only then did the man turn to see Monkey carrying his begging bowl.

"Venerable benefactor," said Monkey, "I'm with the monk sent to the Western Heaven by the emperor of Great Tang in the East to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. As we were passing this way and my master is very hungry I have come to your honorable residence to beg for a vegetarian meal."

The old man nodded, hit the ground with his stick and said, "Reverend sir, don't beg here. You've lost your way."

"No, I haven't," said Monkey.

"The main trail West is over three hundred miles North of here," said the old man, "so why aren't you on that?"

"That's where I've come from," Monkey replied. "My master is now sitting by the main trail waiting for me to bring him some food."

Chapter 50

"You're talking nonsense, monk," the old man replied. "How could your master be waiting by the main trail for you to bring him some food? Even if you could walk this far it would take you six or seven days to cover over three hundred miles and as long again to get back. By then he would have starved to death."

"Honestly, benefactor," replied Brother Monkey with a smile. "I have only just left my master, and it took me less time to get here than it would to drink a cup of tea. When I've been given the food I'll take it back for his lunch."

This alarmed the old man, who drew back at once, saying, "That monk's a demon, a demon."

He was just about to go back inside when Monkey took hold of him and asked, "Where are you going, benefactor? Give me some food at once."

"It's very difficult," the old man said, "very difficult. Try somewhere else."

"You really don't understand, benefactor," Monkey replied. "Just think, I've had to come over three hundred miles to get here, so it would probably be another three hundred miles to another house. You're trying to make my master starve to death."

"I tell you frankly," the old man said, "that we can only put three pints of rice in the pot for the six or seven members of the family, and it's still cooking. Try somewhere else first."

"There is an old saying," Monkey replied, "that it's better to stay in one house than to call on three. I'm staying put." The old man lost his temper with Monkey for being so persistent and raised his stick to hit him. This did not worry Monkey at all, who allowed the old man to hit him on his shaven pate seven or eight times: it felt like having the itches on his head scratched.

"You're a monk who likes being hit on the head," said the old man.

"Hit me as much as you like, oldy," said Monkey. "I'm keeping the score and you'll have to give me a pint of rice for every blow."

When the old man heard this he dropped his stick, rushed inside, shut the gate and shouted: "A demon, a demon." This made the whole household shake with fear as they shut the front and back gates in a great hurry.

Watching the gates being shut Monkey thought, "I wonder if the old villain was telling the truth about the amount of rice they cook. As the saying goes, the good are converted by Taoism and the stupid by Buddhism.

I'm going in to take a look round." With that the splendid Great Sage made a spell with his hands to make himself invisible and went straight to the kitchen to look. He saw that the pot was steaming and half filled with grain, so he thrust his begging bowl into it, filled it to the brim, and went back on his cloud.

The Tang priest meanwhile, who had been sitting in the circle for a long time waiting for Monkey to come back, stretched, looked around and said, "Where has that ape gone to beg for food?"

"Goodness only knows where he is— —probably fooling around," said Pig with a laugh beside him. "Begging for food, indeed! He's left us here in a pen."

"What do you mean, in a pen?" Sanzang asked.

"That's something else you wouldn't know, Master," Pig replied. "In the old days people used to draw circles on the ground to make pens. He draws a circle with his cudgel and says it's stronger than a wall of bronze or iron. But how could it possibly keep out any tigers, wolves or evil monsters that came here? We'd be a meal served up to them on a plate."

"What should we do about it, Wuneng?" Sanzang asked him.

"We're not sheltered from the wind or the cold here," Pig said. "If you ask me we should carry on West along the trail. Monkey went off begging on his cloud, so he's bound to be back soon. He'll catch up with us. If he's got any food we can eat it before going on. All we've got from sitting here so long is cold feet."

These words were to be Sanzang's undoing: he followed the idiot's advice and they all left the circle. The Tang Priest walked along the trail with Pig leading the horse and Friar Sand carrying the luggage. They soon reached the house with high towers, which was a South −facing compound. Outside the gates was a whitewashed wall, above which rose a multicolored gatetower shaped like lotuses leaning together. The gates stood half open. While Pig tethered the horse to a stone drum by the threshold Friar Sand put the luggage down and Sanzang sat on the doorsill out of the wind.

"Master," said pig, "this looks like a nobleman or a minister's house. There's nobody at the gates, so I suppose they're all inside warming themselves up by the fire. Sit down and let me take a look."

"Do be careful," said the Tang Priest. "Don't go charging into their house."

"I know," said the idiot. "I'm a lot better mannered now I'm a Buddhist. I'm not a village yokel any more."

The idiot tucked his rake in his belt, straightened his black brocade tunic, and went in through the gate in a very affected way. He saw a large hall with high, curtained windows that was completely quiet and deserted.

There were no tables, chairs or other furniture. When he went round the screen and further into the house he found himself in a passageway at the end of which stood a multi −storied building with upstairs windows half open through which yellow damask bed −curtains could be glimpsed. "I suppose they're still in bed because it's so cold," thought Pig, whereupon he marched up the stairs without worrying about the propriety of invading the private quarters of the house. When the idiot lifted the curtain and looked inside he almost collapsed with shock: on the ivory bed inside the curtains was a pile of gleaming white bones, with a skull the size of a bushel measure and thighbones some four or five feet long.

When the idiot calmed himself the tears poured down his cheeks as he nodded to the skeletons and said with a sigh, "I wonder:

For what great dynasty you once were a marshal

In what country's service did you hold high command?

Then you were a hero fighting for mastery,

But now you are only a pile of old bones.

Where are the widow and child making offerings?

Do no soldiers burn incense to honour your memory?

Chapter 50

The sight is enough to make one sigh deeply:

Alas for the man who once was a conqueror."

As pig was sighing with grief there was a flicker of fire behind the curtain, "I suppose there must be attendants at the back to offer him incense," the idiot thought. When he rushed round the bed—curtain to look he saw that it was the daylight shining through the windows, beside which stood a coloured lacquer table. On it were thrown some padded clothes in brocade and embroidery. When the idiot picked them up to look at them he saw that they were three quilted brocade waistcoats. Not worrying about whether it was right to do so the idiot took them downstairs and went out through the main hall and the gates.

"Master," he shouted, "there's no sign of life here— —it's a house of the dead. I went inside and went upstairs, where I found a pile of bones behind a yellow bed—curtain. On one side of the upper floor were three quilted brocade waistcoats, look— —I've brought them back with me. We're really in luck as they're just what we need now that the weather has turned cold. Take your habit off, Master, and put one of these on underneath. You'll be a lot more comfortable: it'll keep the cold out."

"No," said Sanzang, "it's forbidden. The law says, 'Taking, whether openly or in secret, is always theft.' If anyone found out, came after us and handed us over to the authorities we would definitely be found guilty of theft. You had better take them back in and put them where you found them. We shall just sit here for a while to shelter from the wind and carry on along our way as soon as Wukong is back. Monks should not be looking out for easy pickings like that."

"But there's nobody around who could know," said Pig, "not even a chicken or a dog. The only people who know are ourselves. Who's

going to sue us? There's no evidence. It's just the same as if we'd picked it up.

Taking or stealing just doesn't come into it."

"Nonsense," said the Tang Priest. "Even if nobody else knew about it Heaven cannot be fooled. As the Lord of Origin teaches us, 'Do no evil in a dark house: the eyes of the gods are like lightning.' Take it back at once and stop hankering after what you have no right to."

The idiot was having none of this. "Master," he said to the Tang Priest with a grin, "I've worn several waistcoats in my life, but never have I seen quilted brocade ones like this before. Even if you don't want to wear one, please let me just try one on to warm my back up. When Monkey comes back I'll take it off and we can be on our way again."

"In that cast," said Friar Sand, "I'd like to try one too." The two of them took off their outer tunics and put the waistcoats on instead. As soon as they had tightened the belts they collapsed, unable to stay on their feet. The waistcoats were even worse than bonds. In an instant both of them had their hands tied together behind their backs. Sanzang stamped his foot in despair and indignation and rushed forward to untie them, but to no avail.

The three of them set up endless yells that soon disturbed a demon king.

Now these buildings had indeed been created by the magic of an evil spirit who spent all his life lying in wait there to catch people. Hearing the howls of anger as he sat in his cave he rushed out to find that he had several victims tied up. The monster called for his little demons to go there with him as he made all the enchanted buildings vanish. They returned to the cave holding the Tang Priest, leading the horse, and dragging Pig and Friar Sand. The old demon took his seat on his throne while the little devils pushed Sanzang to the foot of the steps and forced him to kneel on the floor.

Chapter 50

"Where are you from, monk," the demon asked, "and how can you have the effrontery to steal my clothes in broad daylight?"

"I have been sent to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven by the emperor of Great Tang in the East,"

replied Sanzang. "As I was hungry I sent my senior disciple to beg for food. He has not come back yet, and it was because I ignored his good advice that I blundered into your immortal hall to shelter from the wind, never imagining that my disciples would be so grasping as to steal your clothes. As I have no such wicked thoughts I told them to take the clothes straight back, but they paid no attention and insisted on putting them on to warm their backs. Never did I imagine that we would fall into Your Majesty's trap and be captured. I beg you in your mercy to spare our lives so that we can fetch the scriptures. We will be eternally indebted to Your Majesty and your praises will be sung for ever after we return to the East."

"But I'm always hearing people say that if you eat the flesh of the Tang Priest, white hair can be turned black, and teeth that have fallen out will grow again," said the demon with a grin. "You've come along today without even having been asked, and now you expect me to spare you! What's your senior disciple called, and where has he gone begging?"

This question started Pig bragging: "My elder brother is Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who made havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago."

This news shocked the demon speechless. "I've long heard of that damned ape's enormous powers," he thought, "and now I'm meeting him when I least expected to. Little ones," he ordered, "tie the Tang Priest up, take my precious coats off the other two, and fetch a couple of ropes to bind them. Take them to the back, and when I've caught the senior disciple we can scrub them all clean, put them in the steamer and cook them." The little demons acknowledged his orders then bound the three of them together and carried them to the back.

They tethered the white horse by the trough, took the luggage indoors, and sharpened their weapons ready to capture Monkey.

Monkey, meanwhile, who had filled his begging bowl with rice in the farmhouse to the South, rode his cloud back and landed it on a stretch of level ground on the mountainside to find the Tang Priest gone he knew not where. The circle he had drawn with his cudgel was still there, but travelers and horse had disappeared. When he looked towards where the buildings had been they had vanished too: all that could be seen were mountains and grotesquely shaped rocks.

"Don't tell me!" he thought with horror. "They've been caught." He rushed after them, following the horse's prints Westwards.

About two miles later, when he was feeling thoroughly gloomy, he heard voices on the other side of the slope to the North of him. When he looked he saw an old man in felt clothes, a warm hat and a pair of worn oiled cloth boots holding a dragon – headed stick and followed by a slave boy. The old man had broken off a sprig of plum blossom and was singing a song as he came down the slope. Monkey put down his begging bowl and looked the old man in the face as he put his hands together and said, "Greetings, grandfather."

"Where are you from, reverend sir?" replied the old man, returning his bow.

"We are monks from the East going to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures,"

said Monkey. "There are four of us altogether, a master and three disciples. I went off to beg for some food as my master was hungry, so I told the other three to wait for me at a stretch of level ground on that mountainside. When I came back they had gone, and I don't know which way they went. May I ask you if you Chapter 50

have seen them, grandfather?"

The question made the old man chortle. "Did one of the three have a long snout and big ears?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, yes," Monkey replied.

"And was there another with an evil – looking mug leading a white horse, and a fat monk with a white face?"

"That's right, that's right," said Monkey.

"Then you've all lost your way," said the old man. "Don't bother looking for them: It's every man for himself."

"The white – faced one is my master and the funny – looking ones are my brother disciples," Monkey replied.

"We're all set on going to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures.

Of course I've got to look for them."

"When I came this way just now I saw that they had lost their way and were heading straight into the demon's mouth," the old man said.

"I would be very grateful, grandfather," replied Monkey, "if you could tell me which demon it is and where he lives. I want to call on him and ask for them back so that we can go on with our journey to the Western Heaven."

"This mountain is called Mount Jindou and there is a Jindou Cave in front of it," the old man replied. "In the cave lives the Great King Rhinoceros. His magic abilities are enormous and he is very powerful. All three of your people must be dead by now. If you go looking for them you might not even be able to keep yourself alive. The best thing would be not to go there. I won't try to stop you or to keep you here——I simply leave you to think it over."

Monkey bowed again to thank the old man and said, "Thank you, venerable sir, for your advice. But I have to search for them." Tipping the rice out and giving it to the old man he put his begging bowl away, at which the old man put down his stick to accept the bowl, which he handed to his slave.

Then they both resumed their normal form, fell to their knees, and kowtowed saying, "Great Sage, we dare not try to deceive you. We two are the mountain deity and local god of this place, and we've been waiting here to receive you, Great Sage. We'll look after the rice and your begging bowl to make it easier for you to use your magic powers. When you've rescued the Tang Priest you can do your duty to him by giving him the food."

"Hairy devils," shouted Monkey, "you deserve a flogging. If you knew I was here why didn't you meet me earlier, instead of skulking around in disguise? It's a disgrace!"

"Because you have such a quick temper, Great Sage, we did not want to rush in and offend you," the local god replied. "That was why we disguised ourselves to tell you all that."

"Very well," said Monkey, "we'll postpone that beating. Look after my bowl while I capture that evil spirit."

The Great Sage then tightened his belt of tiger sinew, hitched up his tigerskin kilt, took his gold—banded cudgel in his hands, and headed straight for the mountain in search of the cave. As he rounded a sheer

wall he saw a pair of stone doors set among rocks beside the blue −green rock−face. Outside the doors a crowd of little devils were practicing with sword and spear. Indeed, there were, Chapter 50

Auspicious clouds,

Green lichens,

Rows of strange and craggy rocks,

Steep paths winding around.

Apes howled and birds sang in the beauty of nature;

Phoenixes flew and danced in this land of immortals.

The first blooms were open on plum trees facing South;

A thousand bamboos were green in the sun's warmth.

Under the cliff,

Deep in the gorge:

Under the cliff the snow was piled up white;

Deep in the gorge the stream had turned to ice.

Stands of cypress and pine preserved ancient beauty;

Camellia bushes all bloomed with the same red.

Without waiting to have a thorough look the Great Sage made straight for the doors and shouted at the top of his voice, "Little devils, go straight in and tell your master that I'm Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven and the disciple of the holy Tang Priest, Tell him to send my master out at once if you lot don't all want to be killed."

The little devils all hurried in to report, "Your Majesty, there's a monk at the gate with a hairy face and a crooked mouth. He's called the Great Sage Equaling Heaven Sun Wukong and he's asking for his master back."

The demon was delighted to hear this. "Just the person I wanted to come," he said. "Ever since leaving my palace and coming down to the mortal world I've had no chance to try out my martial skills. Now that he's here I'll have a worthy foe. Bring me my weapons, little ones," he ordered. All the big and little devils in the cave braced themselves and carried out as quickly as they could a twelve – foot – long steel spear that they handed to the old demon, who gave them their instructions: "Little ones, you must keep in neat formation.

Those who advance will be rewarded, and anyone who retreats will be executed."

Having been given their orders the little devils charged out through the doors behind the old demon, who shouted, "Who is Sun Wukong?" Monkey stepped across from beside the entrance to see how ugly and murderous the demon king looked:

Chapter 50

A single jagged horn,

A pair of bright eyes.

The thick skin protruded above his head,

Black flesh shone by his ears.

When he stretched his tongue he could lick his snout;

His mouth when opened wide showed yellow teeth.

His hair was indigo – blue,

His muscles hard as steel.

He was like a rhinoceros, but could not see through water,

Resembled a buffalo but could not plough.

Not useful like the ox who lows at the moon,

He could easily scare the sky and shake the earth.

His purple hands were knotted with muscle,

As he stood erect with his spear of steel.

One only had to consider his hideous looks

To see why he deserved to be called Rhinoceros King.

"Your grandpa Monkey is here," said the Great Sage Monkey, stepping forward. "Give me back my master and neither of us will be hurt. But if there's so much as half a 'no' from you I'll kill you, and there'll be nowhere to bury your remains."

"I'll get you, you impudent devil of an ape," the demon roared back. "What powers do you have that give you the nerve to talk like that?"

"Evidently you've not seen them yet," Monkey replied.

"Your master stole my clothes," said the demon, "and now I've caught him and am going to cook and eat him.

What sort of tough guy do you think you are, daring to come here to ask for him back?"

"My master is a loyal, upright and good monk: he couldn't possibly have stolen any of your devilish goods,"

Monkey replied.

Chapter 50

"I made a magic villa by the mountain path," the demon said, "and your master crept inside. He was so carried away by his greed that he stole three quilted brocade waistcoats. I caught him red—handed. If you really have any powers I'll give you a fight. Hold out against me for three rounds and I'll spare your master's life; fail and you go to the underworld with him."

"Shut up, damned beast," Monkey replied. "A fight would suit me fine. Come here and try a taste of my cudgel." The monster was not at all afraid to fight, and he thrust his spear at Monkey's head, It was a superb battle. Just watch:

The gold – banded cudgel was raised,

The long – handled spear parried.

The gold – banded cudgel was raised,

Flashing like a golden snake of lightning.

The long – handled spear parried,

Glistening like a dragon emerging from the sea.

Outside the doors the little devils beat their drums,

Drawn up in battle order to add to his might,

While the Great Sage showed his skill,

Displaying his abilities freely all around.

On one side a spear and spirits braced,

Against it a cudgel and martial prowess.

Indeed it was hero set against hero,

A pair of well – matched foes.

The demon king breathed out coiling purple mists

While the gleam of the Great Sage's eyes formed coloured clouds Only because the Tang Priest was in trouble

Did both of them fight so bitterly without quarter.

After thirty inconclusive rounds the demon king could see that Sun Wukong was a complete master of the cudgel who could advance or retreat without leaving any openings. "What a splendid ape," he kept saying Chapter 50

with admiration, "what a splendid ape. This was the skill that made havoc in Heaven."

Monkey too was impressed by the demon king's neat spearwork as he

parried to left and right with great skill.

"What a splendid spirit," he said, "what a splendid spirit. He really is a demon who would know how to steal elixir pills." The two of them then fought another ten or twenty rounds.

The demon king touched the ground with the tip of his spear and ordered his little devils forward. All those wretched fiends surrounded the Great Sage with their cutlasses, staves, swords and spears. Monkey was completely unafraid.

"I'm glad you've come along," he shouted, "glad you've come along. Just what I wanted." With his gold-banded cudgel he blocked and parried them in front and behind and to both sides, but the devils would not give ground. Losing his patience, Monkey threw his cudgel into the air, shouted, "Change!" and turned it into over a thousand cudgels that came raining down from the sky like flying snakes, terrifying the devils out of their wits and sending them scurrying back to their cave for their lives with their hands over their heads.

"Behave yourself, ape," said the demon with a mocking laugh, "and watch this trick." He immediately pulled out from his sleeve a gleaming white ring that he threw up into the air with a shout of "Get them!" It came whirling down, catching all the gold-banded cudgels inside it, and forcing Monkey to somersault away for his life as he was now disarmed. While the demon king returned to his cave in triumph Brother Monkey was at his wit's end. Indeed:

The Way grew by one foot but the demon grew by ten.

Blind and confused, they failed to see that the house was fake.

Alas there was no place to be found for the dharma body:

In action and in thoughts they had made a great mistake.

If you don't know how all this ended, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 51

In Vain Does the Mind-Ape Use a Thousand Tricks

Fire and Water Fail to Harm the Demon

The story tells how the Great Sage Equaling Heaven went empty

—handed and beaten to sit down behind Mount Jindou, tears streaming from both eyes.

"Master," he called out, "I had hoped

Chapter 51

705

Journey to the West

As Lord Buddha graciously brought us together

To go on to live with you, Master, for ever,

With you to train and to learn to be free.

Of the favours received ever mindful I'd be.

Our hearts were both joined and our fates were entwined;

As we studied the Way we shared the same mind.

I never expected to be at my wit's end

Unable to win with no stick in my hand."

Just when he was in the depths of misery Monkey thought, "That fiend knew who I was. I remember him saying something about the sort of skill that made havoc in Heaven when he was praising me during the fight.

That means he can't be a common mortal monster: he must be an evil star from Heaven come down to earth for love of worldly things. I don't know where he come down from, so I'd better go up to Heaven to make some inquiries."

Only then did Monkey start using his mind and taking the initiative again. At once he somersaulted up on an auspicious cloud, going straight to the Southern Gate of Heaven, where he looked up to see the Broad—visioned Heavenly King Virupaksa bowing to him in greeting and saying, "Where are you going, Great Sage?"

"There's something I must see the Jade Emperor about," said Monkey. "What are you doing here?"

"It is my turn today to supervise the Southern Gate of Heaven,"

Virupaksa replied, and before he could finish the four marshals Ma, Zhao, Wen and Guan bowed and said, "Great Sage, we failed to greet you. Will you have some tea?"

"I'm busy," Monkey replied, and taking his leave of Virupaksa and the four marshals he went in through the gate and headed straight for the Hall of Miraculous Mist, where the four Heavenly Teachers Zhang Daoling, Ge Xianweng, Xu Jingyang and Qiu Hongji, the Six Officers of the Southern Dipper and the Seven Originals of the Northern Dipper all raised their hands in greeting to him in front of the palace hall.

"For what purpose are you here, Great Sage?" they asked, adding. "Have you yet finished escorting the Tang Priest?"

"It's too early to be talking like that yet," Monkey replied. "It is a very long journey with many a demon along the way and we've only completed half of it. At present we are in trouble at the Jindou Gave in Mount Jindou, where a rhinoceros spirit has grabbed my master and taken him into the cave. When I went there and fought him he had such tremendous magic powers that he seized my gold–banded cudgel. It's impossible for me to capture him. That's why I've come to accuse the Jade Emperor of lax supervision."

"You're as wild and wicked as ever, you ape," said Xu Jingyang with a smile.

"No I'm not," Monkey replied. "I've spoken bluntly all my life as it's the only way to get anywhere."

"That's enough of this talking," said Heavenly Teacher Zhang Daoling. "We will report your arrival."

"Thank you very much," Monkey replied.

The four Heavenly Teachers reported all this to the Hall of Miraculous Mist and then took Monkey to the jade steps to the throne. Monkey make a loud "re–e–er" of respect then said, "Well, old man, I'm here to bother you. I won't bore you with all the dangers of escorting the Tang Priest to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven, but we've now reached the Jindou Cave on Mount Jindou where a rhinoceros

demon has captured the Tang Priest and taken him to his cave. I don't know whether the demon's planning to steam, boil or dry him.

When I went to the cave and fought him he knew who I was, and he really does have miraculous powers. He's taken my gold–banded cudgel, so I can't capture him. I think he must be an evil star from Heaven gone down to earth for the love of worldly things, which is why I've come here to submit a request. I beg Your Celestial Majesty in your mercy and perception to order an inspection of the evil stars and to send troops to capture the demon. I'm shaking with fear of Your Majesty." He then made a deep bow and added, "I beg to submit this report."

Ge Xianweng, who was standing at the side of the hall, smiled as he said, "Why is it that you were recalcitrant before but are respectful now?"

"It's not that," said Monkey, "not that at all. I haven't become respectful. It's just that I don't have my cudgel today."

Having heard Monkey's memorial the Jade Emperor sent an order straight to the star officer Kehan: "Please inspect all the stars in all the heavens and find out if any of the divine kings of any of the constellations have gone down to earth out of love for worldly things. Report back afterwards." Having been given this command the True Lord Kehan went off with the Great Sage to make his inspection. First they went to see the divine kings and the officials at the four gates of Heaven. Then they inspected all the True Ones within the Three Little Enclosures; the Thunder Officers Tao, Zhang, Xin, Deng, Gou, Bi, Pang and Liu; and the Thirty–three Heavens, every one of which was in place. Next they checked the twenty–eight zodiacal constellations: Horn, Gullet, Base, Chamber, Orion, Tail, and Winnower in the East; Dipper, Ox, Woman, Barrens, Roof, House and Wall to the West; and the constellations of the North and South as well; but every constellation was peacefully in its place. They inspected the Seven Powers of Sun, Moon, Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth; and the Four Others– –Rahu, Ketu, the Gases and the Comets. None of the stars in the sky had gone down to earth for love of worldly things.

"In that case," said Monkey, "my journey to the Hall of Miraculous Mist was for nothing. I've disturbed His Jade Majesty– –it was most inconvenient of me. You had better go and report back. I'll be waiting here for your reply." The True Lord Kehan did as he had been told, and Monkey began a long wait. He made up a poem to record his feelings that went,

Pure winds, a cloudless sky, and blissful peace;

Calm gods, bright shining stars, and blessings clear.

Still is the Milky Way; Heaven's troubles cease;

Throughout the world no sounds of war we hear.

Chapter 51

The True Lord Kehan reported back to the Jade Emperor on his thorough inspection: "No star or constellation in the sky is missing. All the regional gods ad officers are present, and nobody has gone down to earth for love of worldly things." Having heard this report the Jade Emperor ordered that Sun Wukong was to select some heavenly generals to take down to earth to catch the demon.

When the four Heavenly Teachers had been given this order they left the Hall of Miraculous Mist and said to Monkey, "Great Sage, the Jade Emperor in his generosity orders you to select some heavenly generals to take down to earth to catch the demon as none of the stars has gone down there for love of worldly things."

Monkey bowed down and thought, "Most of the heavenly generals are not as good as I am: few are any better.

When I made havoc in Heaven the Jade Emperor sent a hundred thousand of his heavenly soldiers who spread out heaven—and—earth nets, but not one of those commanders dared to fight it out with me. The only one who was a match for me was the Little Sage Erlang he sent later. That demon's powers are as good as mine, so how will I ever be able to beat him?"

"Times have changed," said the Heavenly Teacher Xu Jingyang. "As the saying goes, everything can always be beaten by something. Would you dare to disobey an imperial edict? Choose some heavenly generals according to your illustrious judgement and don't waste time: it could be disastrous.

"In that case," said Monkey, "I am very grateful to His Majesty for his kindness, and I would not dare disobey his commands. Besides, I don't want to have made this journey for nothing. So please ask the Jade

Emperor to send Heavenly King Li the Pagoda – carrier and Prince Nezha. They have demon – subduing weapons, so let's see what happens if they go down to earth and fight that fiend. If they can catch him I'll be in luck, and if they can't we'll have to think again."

The Heavenly Teacher reported this to the Jade Emperor, who ordered Heavenly King Li and his son Prince Nezha to take their heavenly troops to Help Monkey. The Heavenly King obediently went to see Monkey, who said to the Heavenly Teacher, "I am extremely grateful to the Jade Emperor for sending the Heavenly King. There is another request I would like you to pass on. I would like two thunder gods to stand in the clouds while the Heavenly King is fighting the demon and kill him by throwing thunder splinters at his head.

This would be a very good method."

"Splendid, splendid," said the Heavenly Teacher, and he reported this request to the Jade Emperor, who then ordered the Office of the Nine Heavens to send the thunder gods Deng Hua and Zhang Fan to help Heavenly King Li capture the demon. They then went out through the Southern Gate of Heaven with the Heavenly King and the Great Sage.

They were soon there. "This is Mount Jindou," said Monkey, "and the Jindou Cave is in it. I would like you gentlemen to decide which of you is going to be the first to challenge the demon to battle." The Heavenly King brought his cloud to a stop and encamped his troops under the Southern slopes of the mountain.

"As you know, Great Sage," he said, "my boy Nezha has put down the demons in ninety – six different caves, is very good at transformation, and always carries his demon – subduing weapons around with him. He should go into battle first."

"That's right," said Monkey. "I'll take him with me."

The prince summoned up his martial prowess, leapt to the mountaintop with the Great Sage, and went straight to the entrance to the cave, where they found the doors tightly closed and not an evil spirit to be seen by the Chapter 51

rock – face. "Vicious fiend," shouted Monkey, going up to the doors, "open up at once and give me back my master."

When the little devils guarding the doors saw this they hurried back to report, "Your Majesty, Sun the Novice has a little boy with him and he's challenging you to battle outside the doors."

"I've got his gold – banded cudgel," the demon king said, "and he'd find it hard to fight me empty – handed, so I suppose he must have found some reinforcements. Fetch my weapons!" He then went outside to look, brandishing his spear. The little boy was a pure and remarkable sight, and full of strength and vigor. Indeed: His face was like the moon when it is full,

Red lips, a square – cut mouth, and silver teeth.

His eye shot lightning from their fearsome pupils;

Over his broad and fine – hued brow were tufts of hair.

His sash danced in the wind like tongues of flame;

A silken gown gleamed golden in the sun.

Bright rings held a bronze mirror at his chest,

And precious armor set off well his warrior's boots.

Tiny in body, but mighty in his voice,

Terrible Nezha, protector of the faith.

"You're Heavenly King Li's third son, Prince Nezha," said the demon with a smile. "Why have you come shouting at my door?"

"Because you have made trouble, vicious fiend, by harming the holy monk from the East. I'm here to arrest you at the command of the Jade Emperor."

"I'm sure Sun Wukong must have asked you here," said the demon king in a great fury. "Yes, I'm the demon who's got the holy monk. I wonder what fighting skills you've got, little boy, if you dare to talk such nonsense.

Stay where you are and see how you like my spear."

The prince met the thrust at once with his demon – beheading sword. Once the two of them had come to blows the battle began. Monkey rushed round the mountain shouting, "Where are the thunder gods? Hurry up and strike the fiend with your thunder splinters to help the

prince subdue him."

The thunder gods Deng and Zhang stepped at once on their clouds and were just about to strike when Prince Nezha used magic to give himself three heads and six arms that wielded six weapons with which he hacked at the monster. The demon king then gave himself three heads and six arms too, holding three long spears with Chapter 51

which he parried them. The prince next used his demon – subduing dharma power and threw his six weapons up into the air. What were the six weapons? The demon – beheading sword, the demon – hacking cutlass, the demon – binding rope, the demon – quelling pestle, the embroidered ball and the fire – wheel.

Nezha shouted "Change!" and each one of them became ten, each ten a hundred, each hundred a thousand, and each thousand ten thousand of the same weapons that flew at the demon like a hailstorm. The demon king was not afraid in the least. Bringing out his gleaming white ring he threw it into the air with a shout of "Catch them!" and as it came whistling down it trapped all the six different kinds of weapons, so terrifying Nezha that he fled for his life empty – handed. The demon king returned to his cave in triumph.

When the two thunder gods saw this from up in the sky they smiled to themselves and said, "It's a good thing we realized how things were going and didn't throw our thunder splinters. If he'd caught them too we'd never have dared report back to the Heavenly Honoured Ones." The pair of them landed their clouds and went with the prince to the Southern slope of the mountain.

"The demon king really has got enormous powers," they told Heavenly King Li.

"The wretched demon's magic powers are nothing much," said Monkey with a laugh, "apart from that terrible ring. I wonder what sort of treasure it is and why it can catch everything when it's thrown into the air."

"You don't have a shred of humanity in you, Great Sage," said Nezha angrily. "We're thoroughly upset after being beaten, and all for your sake too. What have you got to laugh about?"

"You may be upset, but what makes you imagine I'm not?" Monkey replied. "I'm at my wit's end, and as I can't cry about it, laughing's the only thing I can do."

"How are we going to bring all this to an end?" the Heavenly King asked.

"You lot can make whatever plans you like," said Monkey, "but we can only capture him with what his ring can't catch."

"The best things his ring can't catch are water and fire," said Heavenly King Li. "As the saying goes, water and fire show no mercy."

"You're right," Monkey replied. "Sit still here while I go up to Heaven again."

"What for?" the two thunder gods asked.

"This time I won't bother with a memorial to the Jade Emperor," said Brother Monkey. "I'll go straight in through the Southern Gate of Heaven to the Palace of Crimson Splendor to ask Yinghuo, the Star Lord of Fire, to come here and start a fire that will burn the demon and perhaps even reduce his ring to ashes so that we can capture him. Then you can have your weapons back and return to Heaven and my master can be saved."

The prince was greatly cheered up to hear this. "Please don't lose any time, Great Sage," he said, "and get back as soon as you can. We'll wait here."

Monkey set his auspicious light going again and went straight back to the Southern Gate of Heaven, where Virupaksa and the four generals met him and asked, "Why are you back again, Great Sage?"

"Heavenly King Li sent Prince Nezha into battle," Monkey replied, "but in their first fight the demon king took all his six weapons. I now want to go to the Palace of Crimson Splendor to ask the Star Lord of Fire to help us in the fight." The four generals let him in, not daring to delay him any longer.

When he reached the Palace of Crimson Splendor the gods of fire all went in to report, "Sun Wukong is here to see you, my lord."

The Star Lord of Fire of the South straightened up his clothes and came out to greet him with the words,

"Kehan was here to inspect us yesterday, and nobody here is longing for earthly things."

"I know," Monkey replied. "Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha have been defeated in battle and lost their weapons, which is why I have come here to ask for your help."

"Nezha is the God of the Third Altar, the Seas, who first made his name by subduing ninety—six caves of demons," the Star Lord of Fire replied. "His magical powers are tremendous, so if he can't subdue the fiend what hope would I have of doing so?"

"I've discussed it with Heavenly King Li," Monkey replied. "Water and fire are the most powerful things in heaven and earth. That fiend has a ring that can catch things. I don't know what treasure it is. As they say that fire can destroy everything I've come here to ask you, Star Lord, to lead your fire forces down to the mortal world to burn up that evil monster and rescue my master."

When the Star Lord of Fire heard this he mustered his divine troops and went with Monkey to the Southern slopes of Mount Jindou, where he exchanged greetings with the Heavenly King and the thunder gods. "Great Sage Sun," said Heavenly King Li, "call that demon out again and I'll start fighting him. When he throws his ring I'll get out of the way and the Star Lord can lead his forces to burn him up."

"Yes," said Monkey. "I'll go with you." The Fire Star Lord stood with Prince Nezha and two thunder gods on a high peak to challenge the demon to battle.

When the Great Sage reached the mouth of the Jindou Cave he shouted, "Open up! Give me my master back at once."

"Sun Wukong's back," the little devils reported with urgency, and the demon led his horde out of the cave to say to Monkey, "Impudent ape, what soldiers have you brought here?"

Heavenly King Li, the Pagoda—carrier, came forward to shout back, "Vicious monster, do you know who I am"

"Heavenly King Li," replied the demon with a laugh, "no doubt you want to avenge your distinguished son and get his weapons back."

"I want my revenge and his weapons," replied the Heavenly King, "and I'm also going to catch you and rescue the Tang Priest. Stay where you are while I get you with my sword." The demon dodged the cut and thrust back with his spear. The two of them fought a magnificent fight in front of the cave. Just watch: The Heavenly King hacked with his sword,

The demon's spear parried.

Chapter 51

The sword gleamed cold and breathed out fire,

The sharp spear belched out baleful clouds.

One was the monster who had grown up in Jindou Cave;

The other had been sent from the Hall of Miraculous Mist.

One wished to use his might to oppress the dharma nature;

One was employing his greatness to rescue the priest.

The Heavenly King's powers made sand and gravel fly,

The demon fighting back stirred up the dust.

The dust cast heaven and earth in darkness,

The sand and gravel made seas and livers turbid.

The two of them struggled hard for victory

Because the Tang Priest wanted to see the Buddha.

When Monkey saw the two of them starting to fight he jumped up to the highest peak and said to the Star Lord of Fire, "Pay attention." Watch as the demon produces his ring again when the fight is at its fiercest.

When Heavenly King Li saw this he set his auspicious light moving and fled in defeat. At once the Star Lord of Fire issued the order to his troops from his peak to release all their fire together. It was a terrifying sight: The Classic says that in the South is the essence of fire.

Even a single spark

Can burn a hundred thousand acres.

The might of the Star Lord

Could create a hundred different kinds of fire.

He had fire spears, fire swords,

Fire bows and crossbows,

And all his gods used different weapons.

The sky was filled with cawing crows of fire.

Fire horses galloped on the mountaintops.

Fire rats came in twos,

Fire dragons in pairs.

The fire rats coming in twos breathed flame,

Making a thousand miles glow red;

The pairs of fire dragons belched thick smoke,

Casting a pall of darkness all around.

The fire carts were brought out,

The fire gourds opened up.

When fire banners waved the skies glowed sunset – red;

Fire cudgels made the whole earth blaze.

Compared with this the charge of burning oxen was nothing;

This beat Zhou Yu's fire ships attacking Red Crag.

It was a terrible heavenly conflagration,

A blazing burning storm of fire.

But the onslaught by the fire did not frighten the demon in the least. He threw his ring up into the air, and as it came whistling down it caught the fire dragons, fire horses, fire crows, fire rats, fire swords, fire spears, fire bows and fire arrows. The demon then led his troops back to his cave in victory.

The Fire Star Lord, holding a useless banner, called back his officers and went to sit with Heavenly King Li and the others on the Southern slope of the mountain. "Great Sage," he said to Monkey, "I've never seen so ferocious a demon before. Now I've lost all my fire – raising equipment what am I to do?"

"Stop complaining," said Monkey with a smile. "Will you gentlemen please sit here for a while while I go off again?"

"Where are you going this time?" Heavenly King Li asked.

"If that fiend isn't bothered by fire I'm sure he must be vulnerable to water. As the saying goes, water defeats fire. I'm going to the Northern Gate of Heaven to ask the Star Lord of Water, the planet Mercury, to use the power of water to flood the cave and drown the demon king. Then I'll be able to return you all your things."

"That's a very good idea," said the Heavenly King, "except that I'm afraid your master might be drowned too."

"No problem," said Monkey. "Even if he is drowned I have a way that will bring him back to life. But I'm wasting your time, gentlemen, and that is quite wrong."

"In that case," said the Star Lord of Fire, "please be on your way."

The splendid Great Sage went straight to the Northern Gate of Heaven by his somersault cloud. He looked up to see the Heavenly King Vaisravana bowing to him and asking, "Where are you going, Great Sage Sun?"

"There is something about which I must see the Star Lord of Water in his Palace of Dark Vastness," said Monkey. "What are you doing here?"

"It is my turn to patrol today." Vaisravana replied. As he was speaking the four heavenly generals Pang, Liu, Gou and Bi greeted him courteously and offered him tea.

"As I'm in such a hurry I won't trouble you," said Monkey, and taking his leave of them he went straight to the Palace of Dark Vastness, where he sent all the gods of Water in to announce him.

"Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, is here," they reported. As soon as he learned this the Star Lord of Water dismissed the gods of the Four Seas, the Five Lakes, the Eight Rivers, the Four Streams, the Three Great Watercourses and the Nine Tributaries, as well as all the dragon kings, then straightened his hat, tightened his belt, and went out through the gates of the palace to greet him and lead him inside.

"Yesterday Kehan came here on his inspection," the Star Lord said. "He wondered if any of my Water gods had become demons because they longed for worldly things. We are checking all the gods of rivers, seas and streams but have not yet finished."

"That demon king's no river god," said Monkey, "He's a much more powerful spirit. The Jade Emperor sent Heavenly King Li, Prince Nezha and two thunder gods down to the lower world to capture him, but he caught Nezha's six magic weapons with a ring. So I had to go up to the Palace of Crimson Splendor to ask the Star Lord of Fire to take all his fire gods to start fires, but the fiend caught the fire dragons, fire horses and everything else with his ring. I reckon that as he isn't bothered by fire he must be vulnerable to water, which is why I've come here to ask you to deploy your water, capture the fiend for me, return the heavenly generals'

weapons, and rescue my master too."

When the Star Lord of Water heard this he ordered the Earl of the Yellow River to go with the Great Sage to help him. "I can carry water in this," said the river earl, taking a white jade bowl from his sleeve.

"But that can't hold very much," said Monkey. "How could it possibly drown the fiend?"

"I'm not lying when I tell you that this bowl can hold the waters of the Yellow River," the earl replied. "Half a bowlful is half the river, and the whole bowlful is the whole river."

"Half a bowlful will be all we need," replied a delighted Monkey, who then took his leave of the Star God of Water and hurried out through the gates of Heaven with the Earl of the Yellow River.

The earl half filled his bowl in the Yellow River then went with the Great Sage to Mount Jindou, where he greeted the Heavenly King, the prince, the two thunder gods and the Star Lord of Fire, who started telling him what had happened until Monkey said, "Cut out the details. River earl, come with me. When I shout at the doors telling them to open up don't wait till the doors are open. Tip the water straight in and drown the whole Chapter 51

den of demons. Then I'll fish out the master's body and bring him back to life."

The earl did as he was told, following Monkey round the mountain to the mouth of the cave.

"Open up, devils," Monkey shouted, and when they recognized his voice the little devils hurried in to report that he was back, At this the demon king went out again, brandishing his spear and taking his treasure as the doors opened with a loud noise. The river god threw all the water in his white jade bowl into the cave. Seeing it coming, the demon threw down his spear and quickly took out his ring to seal the inner doors tightly. The water then all surged noisily out again, giving Sun Wukong such a fright that he had to give an immediate somersault and leap straight back up to the mountaintop with the river god. The Heavenly King and the rest of them then stood on their clouds in front of the peak looking at the great waves of the mighty flood. It was splendid water. Indeed:

A mere scoopful

Produces fathomless depths;

A divine achievement

Fills a hundred rivers for the general good.

Hear the great roaring shake the valley,

See the mighty waters flood the sky.

A sound like thunder fills the world with awe;

Fierce are the waves with curling crests like snow.

The towering waves now inundate the roads,

While countless billows wash against the mountains.

Cold they are as nephrite,

Rolling with the sound of strings.

As they crash against the rocks they scatter chips of jade;

The waters swirl in eddies as they ebb.

The current sweeps across all dips and hollows,

Filling ravines and joining all the streams.

The sight filled Brother Monkey with alarm. "This is terrible," he said. "The water's flooding the peasants'

fields, and going everywhere except into the demon's cave. What are we to do?" He asked the river god to put Chapter 51

his water away at once.

"I can only let it out," the earl replied. "I can't put it away again. As the saying goes, spilt water can't be picked up." Oh dear! But as the mountain was both high and steep the water flowed down it fast and in a few moments had all gone away along gullies and ravines.

Some little devils leapt out from the cave and played around with great pleasure as before, shouting, yelling, shaking their fists, waving their sleeves, and brandishing their cudgels and spears. "So the water

never got inside the cave at all," said the Heavenly King. "All that effort was for nothing." Unable to control the great anger that surged up him, Monkey charged the demon king's doors, lashing out with both fists, shouting,

"Where do you think you're going? I'll get you."

The terrified little devils dropped their spears and cudgels and fled back into the cave to report in fear and trembling, "Your Majesty, he's attacking again."

The demon king went out through the doors, his spear at the ready, and said, "Impudent ape, you're such a hooligan. You've tried and failed to beat me several times. Even fire and water have got nowhere near me. So why are you here again? To throw your life away?"

"You've got it the wrong way round, my boy," said Brother Monkey. "It's not me throwing my life away, but you throwing yours away. Come here and I'll punch you one."

"You're just trying to be awkward, ape," the demon king replied with a laugh. "You can use your fists, but I'll use my spear. Your skinny little fist is no bigger than a walnut. It's not even the weight of a small hammer.

Very well then. I'll put my spear down and we'll try some boxing."

"Well spoken," said Monkey with a smile. "Come on then."

The demon then hitched up his clothes and took up a stance with both of his fists raised. They were the size of the mallets used in oil −presses. The Great Sage spread his feet apart, summoned up his energy, and started to show his skill as he traded blows with the demon king in front of the doors of the cave, it was a splendid fight.

Goodness!

They started with a foursquare stance,

Kicked with pairs of flying feet.

Each threw with menace at the other's chest

Hard blows that could cut out the heart.

The Immortal pointing the way

"Lao Zi riding his crane."

Terrible as the tiger when he falls on his prey,

Vicious as the dragons sporting in the water.

Chapter 51

The demon king did a dragon roll;

The Great Sage fought like a roebuck with his antlers.

They kicked up their heels like spitting dragons,

Twisting their wrists like sky – supporting camels.

The blue lion opened its jaws,

The carp leapt so high he risked breaking his back.

Flowers were scattered around their foreheads,

And ropes pulled tight around their waists.

The wind stayed close to the fan,

The driving rain made blossoms fall.

When the demon used a "Guanyin hand"

Monkey countered with an "arhat's foot."

The longer punches were open and relaxed,

Not as intense as the short jabs to the body.

When they had fought for several dozen rounds

Their skills were equal; no winner had emerged.

While the two of them fought in front of the cave Heavenly King Li and the Star Lord of Fire were shouting and clapping in encouragement and admiration. The two thunder gods and Prince Nezha led the armies of the gods to leap down by where they were

fighting to help Monkey, while on the other side the devilish horde all came forward to guard their master with banners, drums, swords and cutlasses. Seeing that things were going badly Monkey pulled out a handful of hairs, scattered them in the air, and with a shout of "Change!" turned them into three or four dozen little monkeys who rushed forward and held the demon still.

They put their arms round his legs, grabbed him by the waist, jabbed at his eyes, and pulled his hair. The demon in his alarm pulled out his ring. When Monkey arid the Heavenly King saw him doing this they turned their clouds away and fled back to the top of the mountain to keep out of the way of the fight. As soon as the demon threw the ring into the air it came whistling down, caught the three or four dozen little monkeys who were hairs transformed and turned them back into their original form. The demon took them into the cave when he led his troops back in triumph, shut the doors and celebrated.

"Great Sage," said Prince Nezha, "you really are a tough guy. That was a superb display of boxing, as skilful as putting embroidery on brocade. And by magically dividing yourself up you showed him how good you are."

Chapter 51

"You gentlemen were all watching from here," said Monkey with a smile. "How did the demon's technique compare with mine?"

"His boxing was slack and his footwork slow," said Heavenly King Li, "where you were neat and quick.

When he saw us going he was worried, and when you used your self −dividing magic he was panicked, which was why he had to use his ring magic."

"The demon king would be easy enough to deal with," said Monkey, "if it weren't for his ring. That's hard one to beat."

"If we're to beat him," said the Star Lord of Fire to the Earl of the Yellow River, "we have to get that treasure.

We'll be able to capture him then."

"But how else are we to get it apart from by stealing it?" Monkey asked.

The two thunder gods laughed at this and said, "If we're going to do him the honour of stealing it there's nobody to compare with the Great Sage. When he made havoc in Heaven he stole imperial wine, magic peaches, dragon liver, phoenix bone – marrow and even Lord Lao Zi's elixir. That was some skill! Now he ought to be using it to get that ring."

"You are flattering me," said Monkey, "you are flattering me. You'd better sit here while I go and spy things out."

The splendid Great Sage sprang down from the peak and made his way stealthily to the mouth of the cave where he shook himself and turned into a most elegant fly. Look at him: He had wings just as fine as membranes of bamboo,

A body as small as a plum blossom's heart,

His hands and his feet barely thicker than hairs,

And eyes full of lights that both sparkle and dart:

He follows his nose when he smells something good,

And rides on the wind as he flies at great speed.

The scales would not move if he come to be weighed,

And yet he's a lovable true friend in need.

He flew quietly to the doors and crawled in through the narrow gap between them to see all the devils young and old dancing or singing in ranks on either side while the demon king sat on a high dais. Before him were set snakemeat, deer jerky, bears' paws, camels' humps, wild vegetables from the mountain and fruit. He had a celadon jug of wine as well as some delicious – smelling koumiss and coconut toddy, all of which he was drinking freely by the large bowlful. Monkey landed among the little devils and turned himself into a badger Chapter 51

spirit. He inched his way nearer to the throne, but even after taking a long look he could not make out at all where the treasure was hidden.

He quickly withdrew and went round behind the throne, where he saw hanging high from the ceiling in the rear hall the fire dragons groaning and the fire horses whinnying. He looked up to spy his gold－banded cudgel leaning against the Eastern wall. This made him so happy that his heart had an itch he could not scratch, and forgetting his disguise he went over, picked the cudgel up, resumed his own appearance, tried out some movements with it, and started to fight his way straight out of the cave. All the devils shook with terror, and there was nothing the demon king could do about it as Monkey opened up a trail of blood, pushing three over here and pulling a couple down there as he went straight out through the front doors. Indeed:

The demon was unready in his pride;

The cudgel went back to its owner's side.

If you don't know whether all turned out for good or for ill, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 52

Monkey Makes Havoc in the Jindou Cave

The Buddha Gives a Hint About the Owner

The story tells how after recovering his gold－banded cudgel Monkey fought his way out of the cave and jumped up to the peak to see all the gods. He was very pleased with himself. "How did it go this time?" asked Heavenly King Li. "I did a transformation and went into the cave," said Monkey, "where I saw the devils dancing, singing and drinking to celebrate their victory. But I heard nothing about where the demon keeps his treasure. When I went round to the back I heard the horses and dragons whimpering and realized they must be the fire beasts. My gold－banded cudgel was leaning against the Eastern wall, so I took it and fought my way out of the cave."

"You have your treasure now," said the gods, "but how are we going to get ours back?"

"Easy," said Monkey, "easy. With this iron cudgel I can beat him whatever he does. I'll recover your treasures." As they were talking there rose from the mountainside a concerted sound of gongs and drums as well as earth－shaking shouts: the Great Rhinoceros King was leading his host of spirits out in pursuit of Monkey, who called out at the sight of them, "Great, great, Just what I want. Please sit

down, gentlemen, while I go to capture him."

The splendid Great Sage raised his iron cudgel and struck at the demon's face with a shout, "Where do you think you're going, damned demon? Take this!" Warding the blow off with his spear, the demon insulted him back: "Thieving ape! You're a disgrace. How dare you steal my property in broad daylight?"

"I'll get you, evil beast. Have the decency to die! All you can do is use your ring to steal our property in broad daylight. None of those things are really yours. Stay where you are, and take this!" Once again the monster parried with his spear. It was a splendid fight.

Chapter 52

719

Journey to the West

The Great Sage was ferocious,

The demon was not gentle.

Both sides fought with courage;

Neither would give in.

The iron cudgel was a dragon's tail,

The long spear was a serpent's head.

Blows from the cudgel whistled like the wind,

The spear's moves flowed as smoothly as a stream.

The mountain darkened, wreathed in coloured mists;

Auspicious clouds hung heavy on the woods.

The birds in the air all stopped their flying;

The wild beasts of the field all hid away.

The demons on one side raised battle cries

While Monkey on the other was Ml of vigor.

An iron club that no one could withstand

Had fought its way along the long road West;

A long spear that was a worthy match,

And always held its power supreme on Mount Jindou.

Once they joined battle there could be no respite:

They swore to carry on until one conquered.

The demon king and the Great Sage had been fighting for six hours without either gaining the upper hand. As night was falling the evil spirit held out his spear and said, "Stop, Wukong. It's too dark for fighting now. Let's have a night's sleep and I'll go on having it out with you tomorrow."

"Shut up, damned demon," replied Monkey abusively. "I've only just warmed up. I don't care how late it is: I'm going to carry on till one of us has won." The demon gave a shout, made a feint with his spear, and fled for his life, leading his host of devils in retreat back to the cave, where they shut the doors tight.

Chapter 52

720

Journey to the West

When Monkey returned to the mountain top with his cudgel the gods from Heaven all congratulated him.

"You really are strong and capable, Great Sage Equaling Heaven," they said, "and your powers are boundless."

"You're overdoing your praises," Monkey replied.

"No," said Heavenly King Li, coming up to him, "this is not empty praise. You really are a tough guy. The force you were up against today was as strong as the Heaven and Earth nets all those years age."

"Let's not go into all that ancient history," said Monkey. "That demon must be exhausted after his fight with me. I haven't been put to any trouble worth speaking of, so if you'll all sit here and relax I'll go back into the cave, find out where he keeps the ring, and steal it if I possibly can. Then I'll capture the monster, find your weapons, and return them to you to take back to Heaven."

"It's late now," said Prince Nezha. "You'd better have a good night's sleep and go tomorrow morning."

"You don't understand life, my lad," replied Monkey. "Who ever heard of a burglar liking to steal in broad daylight? This sort of groping about has to be done in secret under cover of darkness. That's the way the job's done."

"Stop arguing, Your Highness," said the Star Lord of Fire and the two thunder gods, "We don't know anything about that sort of thing, and the Great Sage is an old hand. Let him make the most of the nighttime, when the demon is exhausted and nobody is expecting anything to happen. Please go at once."

With a chuckle the splendid Great Sage tucked his iron cudgel away, jumped down from the peak and went to the mouth of the cave, where he shook himself and turned into a cricket. Indeed: Hard mouth, black skin, and long antennae,

Bright eyes and legs that bend like branches.

In the clear wind and in moonlight he sings by the wall;

When the night is still he talks like a human.

As he weeps in the dew the scenery seems cold;

His marvellous voice now comes in fits and starts.

Just when the homesick traveler least wishes to hear him

He finds him lurking underneath the bed.

With a few bounds of his mighty legs Monkey was at the doors. Squeezing through the narrow gap between them he squatted at the foot of the wall, looking carefully at where the light was coming from. He saw all the Chapter 52

big and little devils devouring their food like wolves or tigers. Monkey chirped for a while, and a little later the banquet was cleared away and the devils all went to bed. About two hours later, when Monkey had just reached the room at the back, he heard the demon king ordering, "Little ones on the doors, stay awake! Sun Wukong may

change himself into something and sneak in here to steal."

Those who were on watch duty that night were neatly turned out and sounding their clappers and bells. This made it even easier for the Great Sage, to go about his business. Creeping into the monster's bedroom he saw a stone bed on either side of which stood powdered and painted mountain and tree spirits. They were spreading out the bedding and waiting on the old demon, taking off his boots and clothes. When the old demon was undressed Monkey could see the ring gleaming white on his left arm. It looked like a bracelet made from a string of pearls. Instead of taking it off the demon pushed it up his arm a couple of times to jam it more firmly into place before going to sleep. Seeing this, Monkey changed himself again, this time into a brown–skinned flea that jumped up on the bed, burrowed into the bedding, climbed on the monster's arm, and bit him so hard that he sat up with a yell of, "Bloody slaves, you need some more flogging. You didn't shake out the quilt or dust the bed, and I've just been bitten." He rubbed the ring twice more and went back to sleep.

Monkey climbed on the ring and bit him again, so that the monster sat up again, unable to sleep. "I'm itching to death," he complained.

Seeing that the security was so strict and that the demon kept the treasure on himself and was not going to take it off Monkey realized that he would be unable to steal it. So he jumped down from the bed, turned himself back into a cricket, left the bedroom, and went straight to the back, where he heard the groans and whimpers of the dragons and horses again, but now from behind tightly shut doors. Monkey turned back to his own form and went up to the doors to open the lock by magic. He said a spell and rubbed the lock, making its tongues both click open. He then pushed the doors open and rushed inside, where it was as bright as day in the light from all the fire instruments and creatures. He noticed some weapons leaning against the walls on either side: Prince Nezha's demon–hacking cutlass and other arms as well as the fire bows, arrows and the rest of the Star Lord of Fire's gear. Looking all around by the light of the fires he noticed to his delight a handful of hairs lying in a bamboo basket on a stone table behind the doors. Monkey picked them up, blew on them twice with warm breath, shouted "Change!" and turned them into three or four dozen little monkeys. He told them to take the cutlass, sword, pestle, rope, ball, wheel, bow, arrows, spear, carts, gourd, fire crows, fire rats, fire horses and everything else that had been caught in the ring; then he mounted the fire dragon and started a blaze burning from the inside outwards. There was a great roaring and loud cracks that sounded like thunder and cannons. All the big and little demons were

thrown into such panic and confusion that they wrapped themselves in their quilts, covered their heads, shouted and wept. As they had nowhere to flee most of them were burnt to death. When the Handsome Monkey King returned in victory it was about midnight.

When Heavenly King Li and the other gods spotted the dazzling fire from the mountaintop they rushed forward to see Brother Monkey riding the dragon and driving the little monkeys straight up to the peak.

"Come and get your weapons," he shouted, "come and get your weapons." The Star Lord of Fire and Nezha shouted greetings, whereupon Monkey shook himself and put all the hairs back on his body. Nezha recovered his six weapons, and the Star Lord told his subordinates to collect the fire dragon and the rest of the fire creatures and implements. They were all laughing with pleasure as they congratulated Monkey.

The blaze in the Jindou Cave gave the Great Rhinoceros King such a fright that his souls left his body. He sat up at once, threw open the doors of his bedroom, and held the ring out in both hands to the East and the West to put out the fire. Then he ran all around holding out his treasure, which extinguished all the flames and smoke that filled the air, and tried to rescue his demons, most of whom were dead. He could only muster a hundred or so, male and female; and when he looked at where the weapons were kept he found them all gone.

Going round to the back he saw Pig, Friar Sand and the Tang Priest still tied up there, the white horse still Chapter 52

tethered to the trough and the luggage still in the room.

"I wonder which careless little devil started that fire," he said angrily. "Look what it has done!"

"Your Majesty," said his attendants, "the fire was nothing to do with anyone in our household. It was probably a burglar who let all the fire creatures go and stole the magic weapons."

Only then did the demon realize what had happened. "I'm certain it was Sun Wukong," he said. "It can't have been anyone else. No wonder I couldn't get to sleep. The thieving monkey must have turned himself

into something to get in here and bite my arm twice. He must have been trying to steal my treasure but failed because I was wearing it too tightly. So he stole the weapons and released the fire dragon. What a vicious idea: he was trying to burn me to death. Evil monkey! Your cleverness will get you nowhere: you don't know my powers yet. As long as I have this treasure I can go into the ocean without drowning and into fire without being burnt. If I catch that bandit I'll chop him up into little bits and burn him as a torch. That's the only way I'll feel better about it."

After he had been talking to himself in his misery for a long time he did not notice the cocks crowing for the dawn. Up on the mountaintop Prince Nezha, who now had his six weapons back, said to Monkey, "Great Sage, it's light now and we must lose no time. We should fight the demon while his morale is still low. We'll support you with all the fire forces while you take him on, and this time I think you'll be able to capture him."

"You're right," said Monkey. "We'll all pull together. Let's have some fun." Every one of them braced himself and displayed his martial prowess as they headed for the mouth of the cave. "Come out, damned demon,"

shouted Monkey, "and fight with me." The two stone doors had been reduced to ashes by the blaze, and the little devils inside were sweeping up and picking over the cinders. The approach of all the gods made them drop their brooms and their ash forks in panic as they rushed back inside to report, "Sun Wukong is here with a host of gods from Heaven demanding battle again." The news caused the rhinoceros monster great alarm. He noisily ground his teeth of steel, his eyes bulged with fury, and he went out holding his spear and his treasure, pouring out insults: "I'll get you, you thieving arsonist of an ape. What sort of powers do you have that give you the right to treat me with such contempt?"

"Damned devil," retorted Monkey with a smile on his face, "if you want to know my powers I'll tell you: Since I was little my powers have been great;

My fame has spread in heaven and in earth.

As a bright young thing I learned to be immortal,

Acquiring the traditions of eternal youth.

I determined to visit the land of the heart

And reverently went to the country of the sages.

I learned the magic of infinite changes

And roamed at will through cosmic space.

Chapter 52

723

Journey to the West

My hobby was subduing the tigers on the hills;

When bored I forced the ocean dragons to submit.

I was monarch of the Mountain of Flowers and of Fruit,

And showed off my power in the Water Curtain Cave.

Often I decided to go up to Heaven

And in my folly I occupied the place above.

I was called the Great Sage Equaling Heaven

And given the title of Handsome Monkey King.

When they held a banquet of their magic peaches

I was most angry at not being invited.

Secretly I went to steal jade liquor,

Drinking this rare wine in their elegant pavilions.

Liver of dragons, the marrow of the phoenix,

And many other delicacies did I steal that day.

I ate my fill of those immortal peaches,

And packed my stomach with pills of eternal life.

I then purloined all kinds of Heavenly marvel

And tucked away the treasures of that palace.

Because the Jade Emperor had learned of my powers

Heavenly soldiers were sent into battle

The Nine Bright Shiners I sent on their way;

I wounded all five of the evil constellations.

The generals of Heaven were no match for me:

A hundred thousand soldiers all lost their nerve.

The Jade Emperor then was forced to summon

The Little Sage Erlang to join in the fight.

Chapter 52

We both went through our seventy–two changes,

Each of us showing his spirit and strength.

The Bodhisattva Guanyin came to their aid

With her vase of pure water and her sprig of willow,

And Lao Zi used his Diamond Jade

To take me a prisoner back up to Heaven.

They led me in chains to the Jade Monarch's palace

Where legal officials determined my fate.

Strong soldiers were ordered to cut off my head,

But the hacks at my scalp only made sparks fly

When they tried all their tricks but nothing killed me.

I then was escorted to the palace of Lao Zi.

The Six Dings refined me with the fire of their furnace

And made my whole body as hard as steel.

After seven times seven days the furnace was opened,

And out I jumped, more terrible than ever.

The gods all shut their gates, unable to resist,

And the sages decided to ask the Buddha's help.

Great was the power of the Buddha's dharma,

Indeed his wisdom is infinitely mighty.

I wagered with a somersault to jump out of his hand,

But he crushed me with a mountain that rendered me powerless.

Then the Jade Emperor celebrated peace

And the West was proclaimed to be a land of bliss.

I was crushed by the mountain for five hundred years

Never tasting a mouthful of tea or of food.

Chapter 52

725

Journey to the West

When the Golden Cicada came down to earth

He was sent from the East to visit the Buddha.

He wants to bring the scriptures back to China,

So the Tang ruler could save his ancestors' souls.

Guanyin converted me to the side of goodness,

To hold to the teachings and keep myself in check.

Since I was released from the agonizing mountain

I have been heading West to fetch the true scriptures.

Do not try to use your evil cunning, devil:

Return to me my master to worship the Buddha."

When he had heard all this the demon pointed at Monkey and replied, "So you're the thief who robbed Heaven. Stay where you are and take this!" The Great Sage parried the spear whit his cudgel, and just as the two of them were starting to fight again Nezha and the Star Lord of Fire lost their tempers and flung all their magic weapons and fire－raising equipment at the demon king. Monkey was more ferocious than ever, while the thunder gods with their thunder splinters and the Heavenly King with his sword rushed into the fray together, not worrying about rank and seniority.

The demon king gave a mocking and majestic laugh, discreetly brought the ring out of his sleeve and threw it into the air with a shout of "Catch them!" It came whistling down, catching the six magic weapons, all the fire－raising equipment and creatures, the thunder gods' thunderbolt, the Heavenly King's sword and Monkey's cudgel. Once again the gods were all empty－handed and the Great Sage Sun disarmed. The triumphant demon turned round to say, "Little ones, fetch rocks to make new doors, and start digging and building to refurbish all the rooms inside. When that's done I'll slaughter the Tang Priest and his disciples as a thanksgiving to the local god, and you'll all have a share." The little demons all set to as they had been instructed.

When Heavenly King Li led his troops back up the mountain the Star Lord of Fire was grumbling about Nezha's impatience and the thunder gods were angry with the Heavenly King for behaving badly. The only person keeping quiet was the Earl of the Yellow River. Seeing how they were all unwilling to look each other in the face and were worried, desperate, resentful and trying to make himself look cheerful, Brother Monkey said to them with a smile, "Don't be upset. Victory and defeat are all part of the soldier's routine. The demon's only so－so in fighting skill. The only thing that makes him so dangerous is that ring which has caught all our weapons again. Don't worry. I'll go and make some more inquiries about who and what he is."

"But last time you asked the Jade Emperor to have an inspection of the whole of Heaven you found no trace of him," said Prince Nezha. "Where are you going to look for him now?"

Chapter 52

"As I recall," said Monkey, "the Buddha's dharma is boundless. I'll go to the Western Heaven to ask the Tathagata Buddha to look at all four continents with his all–seeing eyes and find out where the demon was born, where his home is officially registered, and what his ring really is. Whatever happens we must capture him to avenge you gentlemen and allow you to return to Heaven happy."

"In that case," said the gods, "don't stay here a moment longer. Go at once."

Splendid Monkey said, "Go!" and with one bound of his somersault cloud he was soon at Vulture Peak.

Bringing down his auspicious right he looked all around. It was a wonderful place: Nobly tower the sacred peaks,

Pure is the beauty of the many crags,

Magical summits rise to touch the jade–blue sky,

This is what holds the Western Heaven in place,

Dominating China with its great might.

Its primal energy permeates earth and sky,

Covering all with splendor as its majesty spreads.

The sounds of bells and chimes reverberate for long

While voices can be heard reciting holy sutras.

Under blue pines the faithful preach

While arhats stroll among the cypresses.

White cranes come with purpose to the Vulture peak;

Phoenixes choose to perch on its empty pavilions.

Monkeys in twos pick immortal fruit;

Pairs of deer present milk vetch.

The songs of hidden birds seem to pour out their woes;

One cannot put names to the strange and brilliant flowers.

Ridge upon ridge enfold here many times over;

Smooth are the ancient paths that wind around.

This is a place of purity and magic,

The noble home of the enlightened Buddha.

As Monkey was admiring the mountain scenery someone called to him, "Where have you come from, Sun Wukong, and where are you going?" He turned round at once to see it was an honorable bhiksuni, or nun.

"There is a matter on which I would like to see the Tathagata," said Monkey with a bow.

"You're so naughty," said the bhiksuni. "If you're here to see the Tathagata why don't you go straight up to his monastery instead of admiring the scenery?"

"I only had the effrontery to look because this is my first visit," Monkey replied.

"Come with me at once," said the bhiksuni, and Monkey went with her to the gates of the Thunder Monastery, where their way was blocked by the eight vajrapanis, the ferocious guardian gods. "Wait here for a while, Wukong, while I make a report on your behalf," said the bhiksuni. Monkey stood outside the gates while the bhiksuni went into the Buddha's presence, put her hands together, and said, "Sun Wukong is here on a matter over which he wishes to see you, Tathagata." The Buddha sent for Monkey, and the vajrapanis then allowed him in.

When Monkey had made his kowtows the Buddha asked, "Why are you here by yourself? I was told that you were converted to the faith after the honorable Guanyin released you, and that you were escorting the Tang Priest here to fetch the scriptures. What has happened?"

"I report to my Buddha," said Monkey, his head touching the ground, "that your disciple has been escorting the Tang Priest Westwards ever since my conversion. At the Jindou Cave in Mount Jindou we're up against an evil demon called the Great Rhinoceros King who has tremendous magic powers. He is holding my master and fellow disciples as prisoners in his cave. I have asked the demon to return them, but his intentions are evil.

When we fought he grabbed my iron cudgel with a gleaming white ring. I thought he might be some officer from Heaven with a yearning for earthly things so I went straight up there, but on inspection could not find any missing. The Jade Emperor kindly sent Heavenly King Li and his son Nezha to help me, but the demon took the prince's six weapons. Then I asked the Star Lord of Fire to burn him out, but he took all the fire – raising equipment and creatures. Next I asked the Star Lord of Water to drown him, but not a drop touched him. I went to a lot of effort to steal back the cudgel and all the rest of it, challenged him to another fight, and lost it all to him again. I have no way of subduing him. That is why I have come to ask my Buddha to show his disciple mercy and look to see where the monster is from. Then I'll be able to arrest his relations and neighbors, capture him and rescue the master. Then we'll all be able to seek the true achievement together reverently."

When the Buddha heard this his all – seeing eyes looked far away, and all was revealed to him at once. "I know who that monster is," he said, "but I must not tell you. You cannot keep your mouth shut, little monkey, and once you put it about that I told you he would stop fighting you and come to make a row here on Vulture Peak. I would only be asking for trouble for myself. Instead I will give you some dharma power to help you capture him."

"What dharma power will the Tathagata give me?" asked Monkey, kowtowing in thanks. The Tathagata Buddha then told his eighteen arhats to open their treasury and take eighteen grains of golden cinnabar sand with them.

"What does golden cinnabar sand do?" Monkey asked.

"Go and have another contest with the demon outside the cave," the

Buddha replied. "Lure him out so that the arhats can drop their sand on him and fix him to the spot. He will not be able to move his body or lift a leg, and you will be able to beat him up as you see fit."

"Splendid," said Monkey with a smile, "splendid. Let's go straight away." Not daring to delay, the arhats fetched the golden cinnabar sand and set out, while Brother Monkey thanked the Buddha once more. When they were on their way Monkey found on counting that there were only sixteen arhats.

"What sort of place is this if you let people bribe their way out of their duties?" Monkey asked.

"What do you mean, bribing their way out of their duties?"

"Eighteen of you were sent," Monkey replied, "so why are there only sixteen of you now?"

Before the words were out of his mouth the arhats Dragon—subduer and Tiger—queller came up to him and asked, "Wukong, how can you be so wicked? We stayed behind to receive the Buddha's instructions."

"You've too tricky," said Monkey, "too tricky. If I'd called out any later I dare say you wouldn't have come at all." All the arhats were laughing as they mounted their auspicious clouds.

They were soon at Mount Jindou. When Heavenly King Li saw them he led his hosts out in greeting and started to tell them all that had happened. "Spare us the details," the arhats said, "Call him out as soon as you can."

The Great Sage made a spell with his hands, went to the mouth of the cave, and started shouting insults:

"Come out, you bloated fiend, come out and see if you can beat your grandfather Monkey."

The little devils flew in to report, and the demon king said in fury, "Who's the thieving ape asked along to help him in his wickedness?"

"There are no soldiers with him," the little devils replied. "He's there by himself."

"How could he possibly dare to come back here alone?" the demon king wondered. "I've got his cudgel. Does he want another boxing match?" Taking his ring and brandishing his spear the demon told the

little devils to clear away the rocks blocking the entrance and leapt outside. "Damned ape," he shouted insultingly, "make yourself scarce. You've been beaten often enough. What are you here shouting for again?"

"Damned demon," said Monkey, "you don't know what's good for you. The only way to stop me coming back is to surrender, apologize and give my master and my fellow disciples back. Do that and I'll spare you."

"I've already had those three monks of yours cleaned up," the monster replied, "and soon I'm going to slaughter them. Don't you realize that yet? Get lost!"

At the word "slaughter" Monkey stamped his feet, and his cheeks reddened as he could not hold back his anger for a moment longer. Dropping his guard he took a sidestep and swung his fist at the monster's face.

The monster struck back with his spear, and not realizing that Monkey was deliberately springing from side to side he allowed himself to be lured South further and further from the cave. Monkey then called on the arhats to throw their golden cinnabar sand at the demon all together. It was a marvellous display of divine power.

Indeed:

Chapter 52

At first it spread like mist or smoke

Drifting gently down from the sky.

A vast expanse of whiteness

In which nothing can be seen;

A blanket of obscurity

That hides one's way in an instant.

The woodcutter loses his mate when gathering firewood;

The young Taoist gathering herbs cannot see his home.

The fine grains blow in the wind like flour,

The coarse ones roll like sesame seeds.

The world is lost to sight, the mountain peaks are dark,

And sunshine from the sky is blotted out.

This is not the dust kicked up by horses

Nor like the softness of a fragrant carriage.

This cinnabar sand is a merciless thing

Covering heaven and earth and capturing all demons.

Only because the monster attacked the true Way

Were the arhats commanded to show off its splendor.

In their hands they were holding pearls of brilliance

To shine with dazzling brightness at the right time.

When the demon was being blinded by the flying sand he bent down to see that it was already three feet deep on the ground. In his alarm he sprang up at once to the level above it, but before he had steadied himself it was already over two feet deeper. Now desperate, he pulled his feet free, took out his ring, and threw it up in the air with a shout of "Catch them!" As it came whistling down it caught all eighteen grains of golden cinnabar sand. The monster went back into his cave.

The empty – handed arhats stopped their clouds. "Why have you stopped dropping your sand, arhats?" asked Monkey as he came towards them.

"There was a noise just now and all our golden cinnabar sand disappeared," they replied.

"That thing must have caught it too," said Monkey with a laugh.

"If he's as invincible as this however are we going to capture him?" the Heavenly King and the rest of them said. "When will we ever go back to Heaven, and how will we be able to face the Jade Emperor?"

Then the two arhats Dragon – subduer and Tiger – queller said to Monkey, "Wukong, do you know why we two were late setting out?"

"I was cross because I thought you were skulking somewhere and not coming," said Monkey. "I didn't know you were having a conversation."

"The Tathagata Buddha gave us these instructions," the arhats replied. "He said, 'That fiend has very great magic powers. If you lose your golden cinnabar sand tell Sun Wukong to go to Lord Lao Zi's Tushita Palace in the Lihen Heaven to find out about the fiend's background. If he does that he may be able to capture the monster easily.'"

"What a horrible thing to do," said Monkey. "The Buddha's tricked me again. He should have told me before and spared you this long journey."

"As those are the Buddha's clear instructions you should be on your way as soon as possible," said Heavenly King Li.

Splendid Monkey. Saying, "I'm off!" he sent his somersault cloud straight in through the Southern Gate of Heaven, where the four marshals raised their hands in greeting and asked how the capture of the demon was going. "I haven't got him yet," said Monkey without stopping, "but I now know where to find out about his background." Not daring to delay him, the four marshals let him pass through. He did not go to the Hall of Miraculous Mist or the Palace of the Dipper and the Bull, but went straight to the gates of the Tushita Palace in the Lihen Heaven that lies beyond the thirty – three heavens, where he saw two immortal boys standing in attendance. Monkey did not report his name but rushed straight in, to the consternation of the boys who grabbed him.

"Who are you?" they asked, "and where are you going?"

"I am the Great Sage Equaling Heaven," Monkey replied, "and I'm here to see Lord Lao Zi."

"How could you be so ill – mannered?" the boys said. "Just wait there while we make a report." Allowing no further discussion Monkey

shouted at them and went straight in, colliding with Lord Lao Zi who was coming out to meet him.

"Haven't seen you for ages, old fellow," said Monkey after bowing and uttering a respectful "re – e – er."

"Why are you here, you little monkey, instead of going to fetch scriptures?" asked Lord Lao Zi with a smile.

To this Monkey replied,

"To fetch the holy scriptures

I toil day and night,

And now that I'm in trouble

To see you would be right."

"What have your troubles on the road to the Western Heaven to do with me?" Lord Lao Zi asked. Monkey's answer was:

"Of the Buddha's West Heaven

Please don't talk today.

It's to follow a trail

That I've come up this way."

"But this is a Supreme Immortals' palace," Lord Lao Zi replied, "so how can you be following anyone's trail up here?"

Monkey went into the palace and looked about him with great concentration. When he had gone along a number of covered walkways he noticed a boy sleeping by the buffalo pen, from which the water – buffalo was missing. "Old man," shouted Monkey, "your buffalo's escaped, your buffalo's escaped."

"When did that wicked beast get away?" asked Lord Lao Zi with horror. The noise woke up the boy, who knelt before Lord Lao Zi and

said, "My lord, I was asleep. I don't know when it went."

"When did you go to sleep, you little wretch?" asked Lord Lao Zi angrily.

"I picked up an elixir pill in the elixir laboratory and ate it," replied the boy with kowtows, "then went to sleep here."

"I suppose you ate one of the seven–fired elixir tablets that must have been dropped when I refined them the other day, damn you," said Lord Lao Zi. "One of those tablets would make you sleep for seven days. The evil beast took the chance to escape and go down to the mortal world when you went to sleep and left it unguarded. That must have been seven days ago." He then ordered an inspection to find out if it had stolen any treasures.

"It doesn't have any treasures, only a terrible ring," said Monkey.

When Lord Lao Zi made an urgent check he found that nothing was missing except a diamond jade bangle.

"The evil beast must have stolen my Diamond Jade Bangle," said Lord Lao Zi.

"So that's what his treasure is," said Monkey, "that's what he fought me with. Goodness only knows how many of our weapons he's caught with that now he's rampaging around in the mortal would."

"Where is that wicked beast now?" Lord Lao Zi asked.

Chapter 52

"In the Jindou Cave on Mount Jindou, where he's holding the Tang Priest and has captured my gold–banded cudgel. I asked for the help of heavenly soldiers, and he took Prince Nezha's magic weapons. When I invited the Star Lord of Fire to come his fire–raising equipment and creatures were taken. Although the Earl of the Yellow River couldn't drown him, at least his gear wasn't taken. Then when I asked the Buddha to send his arhats to scatter their golden cinnabar sand the demon took all that too. It looks as though you are guilty of a very serious crime in allowing a thieving and murderous monster to get away."

"That Diamond Jade Bangle is a treasure I refined and created after I went out through the Han Pass to convert the foreigners. Nothing can get anywhere near it, not weapons, fire or water. But if my Plantain Fan had been stolen not even I would have been able to do anything about it"

Monkey was feeling very pleased as he accompanied Lord Lao Zi, who was carrying his Plantain Fan, out of the palace by auspicious cloud. Once they were through the Southern Gate of Heaven they brought the cloud straight down to Mount Jindou, where Lord Lao Zi greeted the eighteen arhats, the thunder gods, the Earl of the Yellow River, the Star Lord of Fire, Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha, who told him all about what had happened. "For me to catch him Sun Wukong will have to go down to lure him out once more," Lord Lao Zi said.

Monkey jumped down from the peak and started yelling abuse once more. "Bloated, evil beast, come out and be killed."

When the little devils reported once again the demon king said, "I wonder who the evil monkey has fetched this time." He went out with his spear and his treasure to have Monkey cursing him once again.

"Vicious demon, you're definitely going to die this time. Stay there, and take this!" Monkey leapt straight at him, punched the demon on the ear with a swing of his fist, turned and fled. The demon was going after him, wielding his spear, when a shout came from the top of the mountain: "Go home, buffalo. What are you waiting for?"

When the demon looked up and saw Lord Lao Zi he trembled with fear. "That thieving ape really is a devil.

How did he ever persuade my master to come?"

When Lord Lao Zi recited a spell and fanned his fan once, the monster surrendered the ring which the lord caught in his hand. When he fanned it again all the strength went out of the monster, who reverted to his true form as a water – buffalo. Lord Lao Zi then blew on the Diamond Bangle with magic breath, put it thorough the buffalo's nose, undid the sash at his own waist, threaded it through the ring and held it.

To this day water – buffaloes still have devices called pegs put through their noses through which a rope can be run: this does the same job.

Lord Lao Zi then took his leave of the gods, mounted the buffalo, and rode on his multicolored cloud up to the Tushita Heaven, taking the

demon with him on its lead.

Only then could the Great Sage Sun, Heavenly King Li and all of the host charge into the cave, killing all the hundred and more big and little devils and recovering their weapons and equipment. Monkey thanked Heavenly King Li and Nezha, who went back to Heaven; the thunder gods, who returned to their residence; the Star Lord of Fire, who went to his palace; the Earl of the Yellow River who went to his river; and the arhats, who returned to the Western Heaven. Finally he released the Tang Priest, Pig and Friar Sand and took back his iron cudgel. When the three of them had thanked Monkey the horse and the luggage were got ready and master and disciples left the cave to find the main route to the West.

Chapter 52

733

Journey to the West

As they were walking along they heard a call of "Holy Tang Priest, have a vegetarian meal," which startled the master. If you do not know who was calling, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 53

The Dhyana Master Conceives after Eating a Meal

The Yellow－Wife Brings Waster to Remove a Devil Foetus

Eight hundred kinds of virtue must be cultivated,

Three thousand good deeds must be secretly performed.

Do not distinguish objects from self, or friend from foe:

That conforms with the teaching of the Western Heaven.

The rhinoceros demon feared no weapons;

No blame attached to the failure of water and fire.

Lord Lao Zi subdued him and took him to Heaven,

Turning the buffalo round with a smile.

The story goes on to tell who was calling by the wayside. The mountain god and local deity of Mount Jindou came out carrying a bowl of purple gold. "Holy monk," they said, "this bowl of rice was begged by the Great Sage Monkey from a pious household. You fell into the clutches of an evil demon because you would not heed good advice, putting the Great Sage to endless trouble before he was finally able to free you today.

Please eat this food before continuing on your way, and do not be ungrateful for the Great Sage's respect and sense of duty."

"I am very grateful to you, disciple," said Sanzang, "and I cannot find words to express all my thanks. If I had realized before that I should not step out of the circle I would never have been in such danger of being killed."

"I tell you frankly, Master," said Brother Monkey, "that because you did not trust the ring I drew you ended up the victim of someone else's ring. It caused so much trouble and suffering. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!"

"What do you mean about another ring?" Pig asked.

"It was all your fault, you evil-tongued cretin, for getting the master into that terrible danger," said Monkey.

"I had to turn heaven and earth upside down to fetch heavenly soldiers, water, fire, and even the Buddha's cinnabar sand, all of which was caught by his gleaming white ring. It was only because the Buddha gave a hint to the arhats who told me where the demon had come from that I could fetch Lord Lao Zi to subdue him.

He was a water-buffalo turned demon."

"Good disciple," said Sanzang with infinite gratitude when he heard this, "after this experience I shall definitely take your advice in future." The four of them then ate the steaming food. "Why is this rice still hot

after such a long time?" Monkey asked. "I heated it up myself when I knew that the Great Sage had succeeded," replied the local deity on his knees. The food was soon eaten, after which they put the bowl

away and took their leave of the local deity and the mountain god. The master remounted and they crossed the high mountain. Their minds freed from worries, they returned to true perception; dining on the wind and sleeping in the dew they continued to the West. When they had been travelling for a long time it was once again early spring. They heard

The soft call of swallows,

The beauty of orioles.

The soft call of swallows tiring their fragrant voices;

The beauty of orioles and their frequent song.

The land is covered with flowers like brocade,

The emerald – green hills seem piled with cushions.

Fruit forms on the greengage trees on the ridge,

While an ancient cypress holds a cloud before the scar.

Pale is the misty light on the fertile plain;

Warm sands are bathed in the glow of sunset.

Orchards and trees now break into blossom;

Willows grow new shoots as the spring returns.

As they were walking along they came to a little river in which the water flowed cool, pure and deep. When he reined in his horse for a better look the Tang Priest could make out some of the roof of a thatched cottage under the green shade of willows. "That must be a ferryman's house," said Monkey, pointing at the cottage. "It looks likely enough," replied Sanzang, "but I would not like to be too sure as I cannot see any boat."

"Ferryman!" yelled Pig at the top of his voice, putting the luggage down. "Bring the boat over." After a number of these shouts a rowing boat came creaking out from under the willows and was soon near their bank. When they looked carefully this is what they saw:

Short oars dividing the waves,

Lightly skimming on the water.

The hull is painted in many colours,

Enclosing a full hold.

Iron chains are neatly coiled in the bows,

And bright is the tiller in the stern.

Although the skiff is only as light as a reed

It is the equal of an ocean – going vessel.

It may have no ivory mast or silken rigging,

But it does have cassia oars and a sternpost of pine.

Indeed this is no ship for mighty voyages,

Just a ferry fit to cross a single stream,

Coming and going between the river's banks,

Never leaving the ancient crossing place.

The boat was soon at the bank, "This way to cross the river," called the boatman. Urging the horse forward for a closer look, Sanzang saw that the boatman looked like this:

A head wrapped in a toweling cloth,

Feet in black shoes of silk.

Many a patch on cotton – padded tunic and trousers,

And around the waist was a much – stitched cotton apron.

Horny skin on the hands, and muscles hard,

Eyes dim, a wrinkled brow, and an aged face.

But the voice was a melodious as an oriole's song;

At a closer look she was clearly an old woman.

"Do you do the ferrying?" asked Monkey, approaching the boat.

"Yes," the woman replied.

Chapter 53

"Why isn't the ferryman here?" Monkey asked. "Why has he left it to his wife to pole the boat?"

The woman smiled and said nothing as she put the gangplank into position. Friar Sand carried the luggage aboard while Monkey helped the master on then followed himself. Pig led the horse on, after which the plank was stowed. The woman pushed off and quickly rowed them across the river.

When they were on the Western bank Sanzang told Friar Sang to open one of the bundles and take out some coins to give her. The ferry woman did not argue about the amount, but moored the boat by its painter to a stake beside the water and went back into her cottage chuckling.

As he was thirsty and the water was so clear Sanzang said to Pig, "Get the bowl and fetch me some water to drink." Pig did as he was told and handed the water to his master, who drank only about a third of it, leaving two – thirds for the idiot to snatch and down in a single draft before helping the master back on his horse.

Master and disciples had been going less than an hour on the road West when Sanzang started to groan, "My stomach's hurting."

"I've got the bellyache too," said Pig, who was behind him.

"It must be because you drank cold water," said Friar Sand, only to be interrupted by groans of "It's agony!"

from his master and Pig. The two of them were in unbearable pain and their abdomens were gradually swelling. When they felt with their hands there was something like a lump of flesh and blood moving and jerking around incessantly. Sanzang was feeling very unsteady when he noticed two bundles of straw hanging from the top

of a tree in a village by the road.

"That's good, Master," said Monkey. "There's a wineshop there. I'll go and beg you some hot water and find out if anyone sells medicine there and will let you have some medicine to ease your pain."

Sanzang was very pleased with the suggestion, so he whipped the white horse forward and was soon at the gates of the village, where he dismounted. An old woman was sitting on a bundle of straw outside the gates twisting hempen thread. Monkey went up to her, put his hands together in front of his chest in greeting, and said, "We monks have come from the Great Tang in the East. My master is the Tang Emperor's younger brother, and he has a stomachache because he drank some water from a river."

"Which river did you drink from?" asked the old woman, laughing aloud.

"From the clear river to the East of here," replied Monkey.

"What a laugh," chuckled the old woman, "what a laugh! Come inside and I'll explain."

Monkey supported Sanzang while Friar Sand helped pig into the thatched cottage where they sat down. The two of them were groaning in agony from their protruding bellies, their faces sallow and their foreheads creased with frowns. "Please boil some water for my master, missus," said Monkey. "He must have it, and I'll be very grateful."

Instead of doing this she went into the back of the house, still chuckling, and called, "Come and see, come and see!" There was a slap of sandals inside as two or three middle–aged women came out to stare at Sanzang with grins across their faces. This made Monkey so angry that he shouted and bared his teeth at them, sending them all scurrying and stumbling inside in terror.

Monkey went after them, grabbed the old woman, and said, "Boil some water this minute and I'll spare your life."

"My lord," said the old woman, "hot water won't be any use. I can't do anything to help those two with their bellyaches. If you let me go I'll tell you all about it." When Monkey released her she continued, "This is the Womanland of Western Liang. All of us in this country are female, and there isn't a man among us, which is why we were so pleased to see you. It's terrible that the reverend father has drank from that river, which is called the Motherhood River. There is a Male—welcoming Post Station outside our capital with a Pregnancy—revealing Spring. In this country we only dare drink of the river's water when we reach the age of twenty. After drinking it we feel the stomach pains of pregnancy. Three days later we go to the Pregnancy—revealing Spring at the Male—welcoming Post Station. If we see a double reflection in the waters we give birth to a child. Because your master has drunk from the Motherhood River he's pregnant. He's going to have a baby soon. What will a hot drink do to help that?"

Sanzang went pale with shock at the news.

"What am I to do, disciple?" he asked.

"I'm going to have a child, but I'm a man," said Pig, writhing around in his agony. "Where will the child come out? How am I to give birth to it?"

"As the old saying goes, a melon falls when it's ripe," replied Monkey with a laugh. "When the time comes a hole will open under your ribs for it to be born through."

This conversation made Pig shake with fear, and the pain was more than he could bear. "I can't take any more," he said, "I can't take any more. I'm dying, I'm dying."

"Stop fidgeting, brother," said Friar Sand with a grin, "stop fidgeting or else you'll get the umbilical cord in a twist and be ill before the birth."

The idiot's panic was now worse than ever as with tears in his eyes he held on to Monkey and said, "Brother, ask the old lady where there are midwives with a gentle touch and send for some. The pains are coming very close to each other now. They must be labor pains. It'll be very soon now."

"If they're labor pains, brother, you'd better stop writhing about if you don't want your waters to break," said Friar Sand, still grinning.

"My good lady," groaned Sanzang, "are there any doctors round here? Send one of my disciples to buy some medicine that will make me

abort."

"Medicine won't be any use," said the old woman. "There's a Miscarriage Spring in Childfree Cave in Mount Offspring Dissolved on the road due South from here. To end your pregnancy you must drink the water of that spring. But the spring water cannot be had now as a Taoist called the As – you – will Immortal came here the other year and changed the Childfree Cave to the Hermitage of Immortals. He's hoarding the waters of Miscarriage Spring, which he won't give away. Anyone who wants water must take him rich gifts. You have to offer mutton, wine and fruit, and be very reverent indeed before you can get a bowl of the water from him.

You travelling monks couldn't possibly afford to do all that, so you'll just have to let fate take its course and have the babies when your time comes." Monkey, who was very pleased to learn all this, then asked how far it was to Mount Offspring Dissolved. "Ten miles," the old woman replied.

"Fine," said Monkey. "You can stop worrying, Master. I'll go and get you some of the water."

Chapter 53

"Look after the master properly," said the splendid Great Sage in his parting instructions to Friar Sand, "and if the people here try to bully him use your old trick of pulling a face to scare them till I get back with the water."

Friar Sand was preparing to do as he was told when the old woman came out with a big earthenware bowl that she gave to Monkey. "Take this and fetch as much as you can," she said, "so that we can keep some for emergencies."

Monkey left the thatched cottage with the bowl in his hands and was off on his cloud, at which the old woman bowed to the sky and said, "That monk can ride on clouds, my lord." Then she went inside and called the other women out to kowtow to the Tang Priest. They started calling him "arhat" and "Bodhisattva," boiled water and prepared a meal to offer him.

Monkey's somersault cloud soon brought him within sight of a

mountain that blocked his cloud, so he brought it down to gaze at the superb mountain. He saw

A brocade of subtle blossoms,

Wild flowers spreading a green carpet,

Streams running into each other,

Brooks and clouds both at their ease.

Dense grow the creepers in many a valley,

And trees are packed close on a distant ridge.

While songbirds call wild geese fly over,

Deer drink, and gibbons climb.

The green line of peaks stands like a screen;

The blue rock face is shaped like a topknot.

It is hard to reach it across the drifting sands;

None could tire of watching the waterfall.

Taoist boys roam in search of herbs;

Foresters return with loads of firewood.

It is a worthy rival to Mount Tiantai,

And better than the threefold Huashan summit.

Chapter 53

739

Journey to the West

As the Great Sage was looking at the mountain he saw a farmhouse on its Northern slope from where the barking of dogs could be heard. The Great Sage went straight down the mountainside to the farm, which was indeed a splendid place:

A bridge across a lively stream,

A cottage sheltered by the hill,

Dogs barking by the broken fence,

A recluse who comes and goes at will.

Monkey was soon at the gate, where he saw an old Taoist sitting on a green cushion. Putting down the earthenware bowl, Monkey went forward to greet him. The Taoist returned his greeting with a bow from where he sat and asked, "Where have you come from? What business brings you here to this hermitage?"

"I have been sent by the emperor of the Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven," Brother Monkey replied. "My master's belly is unbearably painful and swollen because he drank some of the water of the Motherhood River. When we asked the local people they said it was because he is pregnant, and that there is no cure for this apart from the Miscarriage Spring in Childfree Cave in Mount Offspring Dissolved. So I have come especially to pay my respects to the As – you – will Immortal and beg him for some of the spring water with which to save my master. Could you be so kind as to show me the way?"

"This was Childfree Cave," said the Taoist with a smile, "but now it's called the Hermitage of Immortals. I am none other than the senior disciple of my master the As – you – will Immortal. Tell me your name and I will announce you."

"I am the senior disciple of the Patriarch Tang Sanzang," said Monkey politely, "and my name is Sun Wukong."

"Where are your presents, your wine and your offerings?" the Taoist asked.

"I'm only a passing itinerant monk," said Monkey, "so I haven't been able to arrange them."

"Fool!" said the Taoist with a laugh. "My master controls the spring and never gives any thing away for nothing. You'd better go and fetch your offerings if you want me to announce you, or else go away and forget about it."

"People will do more as a favour than on the emperor's command," Monkey replied. "Go and tell him my name and he's bound to do me this favour. He might even give me the whole spring."

The Taoist went in to report all this to the immortal, who was playing his *qin* zither, and waited till he had finished before saying, "Master, there's a Buddhist monk outside who says he's Sun Wukong, the senior disciple of Tang Sanzang. He is asking for some of the water of the Miscarriage Spring to save his master with." Had the immortal not been told this the matter would have ended there, but at the name of Sun Wukong anger surged up from his heart and evil grew from his gall. He sprang to his feet, stepped down from the low table on which he was playing the *qin,* changed from his informal clothes into his Taoist robes, and rushed out Chapter 53

through the gates of his hermitage with his As – You – Will hook in his hands. "Where is Sun Wukong?" he shouted, and Monkey turned to see that he looked like this:

On his head was a star – crown of many colours,

And his magic robe was red with threads of gold.

The cloud – shoes on his feet were thickly embroidered;

The jade belt at his waist was delicately worked.

His wave – treading hosiery was of brocade,

And glimpses showed of a silk velvet underskirt.

He held a golden As – You – Will hook,

Long – handled with a base shaped like a dragon.

Bright were his phoenix eyes, and lotus – like his brows;

Steel – sharp were his teeth, and his lips bright crimson.

He looked more evil still than Marshal Wen

Although he wore a different kind of dress.

When Monkey saw him he put his hands together and said, "My name, sir, is Sun Wukong."

"Are you really Sun Wukong," said the Taoist master with a smile, "or are you just pretending to be?"

"What a thing to ask, sir! As the saying goes, a gentleman never changes his name whether he's travelling or staying at home. *I* am indeed Sun Wukong. Why should *I* want to pretend?"

"Do you know who *I* am?" the Taoist master asked.

"I've been converted to the Buddhist faith and follow Buddhist teachings," Monkey said. "I've grown distant from the friends of my child hood on this long journey and I haven't visited any. I'm afraid I don't quite recognize you. I only know your name because the people in the village West of Motherhood River told me that you are the As

—you—will Immortal."

"You're busy on your journey, and I am busy cultivating my true arts," the Taoist replied, "so why have you come to see me?"

"Because my master is pregnant and has a belly ache after mistakenly drinking water from the Motherhood River," said Monkey. "I've come to your immortal abode to beg you for a bowl of water from the Miscarriage Spring with which to deliver him from his agony."

"Is your master Tang Sanzang?" asked the Taoist with an angry glare.

"Yes, yes," said Brother Monkey.

"Did you ever meet the Boy Sage King?" asked the Taoist, gnashing his teeth with hatred.

"That was the title of the demon Red Boy in the Fire—cloud Cave by Withered Pine Ravine on Mount Hao,"

Monkey replied. "Why are you asking about him, immortal?"

"He is my nephew," the immortal replied. "I am the brother of the Bull Demon King. He wrote me a letter telling me how Sun Wukong, the vicious senior disciple of Tang Sanzang, destroyed the boy. It was my great regret that I had no way of taking revenge on you here, but now you've come to my door begging for water."

"You are mistaken, sir," said Monkey, putting on a smile. "Your respected elder brother used to be a friend of mine, and we were two of seven sworn brothers in my youth. The only reason I did not come to pay my respects earlier was because I did not know your address. Your good nephew has done very well. He's now serving the Bodhisattva Guanyin as the page Sudhana. He's much better off than the rest of us, so why be so angry with me?"

"Damned ape!" shouted the Taoist master. "How dare you argue like that? Is my nephew better off as a slave than he was when he enjoyed the delights of being a king? Learn to behave yourself, and try a taste of my hook."

Monkey parried with his iron cudgel and said, "Don't talk about fighting. Give me some of the spring water instead."

"Vicious ape," the Taoist master said again, "you don't know whether you want to live or die. If you can hold out against me for three rounds I'll give you your water, but if you can't I shall avenge my nephew by cutting you up and stewing you in soy sauce."

"I'll get you, you impudent and evil creature," replied the Great Sage. "If you want a fight try my cudgel." The Taoist master blocked it with his hook, and the two of them fought a fine battle by the Hermitage of Immortals.

The holy monk conceived after drinking from a river,

So Monkey went to call on the As – you – will Immortal,

Not knowing that the Taoist was in fact a monster,

Who had used his powers to seize the Miscarriage Spring.

When he met Monkey old hatreds were revived:

They were locked in struggle and neither would yield.

As they talked on he became ever angrier,

Evilly determined to have his revenge.

Chapter 53

One came for water to save his master's life,

Which the other would not give for his nephew's sake.

More lethal than a scorpion was the as – out – will hook,

While the gold – banded cudgel struck like a dragon,

The cudgel kept thrusting savagely at the chest,

While the hook made subtle cuts to the legs.

Grievous were the wounds where the cudgel fell,

And the hook rose from the shoulders to strike at the head.

The cudgel swung round the waist

Like a hawk after a sparrow;

The hook struck thrice at the head

Like a mantis catching a cicada.

They came and went as they struggled for mastery,

The ebb and flow of battle taking them forward and back.

There was nothing to choose between cudgel and hook;

Neither contender emerged as the victor.

After the Taoist master had fought over ten rounds with the Great Sage but was no match for him Monkey struck at the head with more ferocity than ever, his cudgel's blows falling like a stream of shooting stars.

Completely exhausted, the Taoist master fled down the mountainside trailing his As – You – Will hook behind him.

Instead of pursuing him Monkey went to the hermitage in search of water, only to find that the other Taoist had already fastened the gates. Holding the earthenware bowl in his hands he went straight up to the gates, kicked through them with all his strength, and rushed in. The Taoist disciple was crouching behind the well's railings. The Great Sage shouted at him, raised his cudgel, and was about to kill him when the Taoist fled into the back. Monkey had just fetched a bucket and was on the point of filling it with spring water from the well when the master came up behind him, caught his feet with the hook, and sent him sprawling on the ground.

The Great Sage pulled himself to his feet and started hitting back with his cudgel. The Taoist master swerved aside and said, wielding the hook, "We'll see if you can steal the water from my well."

"Come here," shouted Monkey, "come here. I'll get you, you evil creature, and I'll beat you to death." The Taoist master did not go for Monkey but just stood guard over the well, preventing him from drawing any water, Seeing that he was not moving, Monkey whirled his cudgel round and round with his left hand and in

his right took the bucket, which he sent noisily down the well on the rope. The Taoist master came back to the attack with his hook. Monkey, unable to hold him off one–handed, was tripped round his legs again and sent sprawling, dropping the bucket and rope down the well.

"What a way to behave," remarked the Great Sage, getting back on his feet and taking his cudgel in both hands to lash wildly back. Once again the Taoist master fled, unable to face him. The Great Sage still wanted to draw some water but now he had no bucket and was also worried that he might be tripped by the hook again. "I'd better get someone to help me," he thought.

The splendid Great Sage turned his cloud round, went straight back to the cottage door, and shouted, "Friar Sand." When Sanzang and Pig, who were groaning and moaning in agony, heard his shout they said with relief, "Friar Sand, Wukong's back."

Friar Sand opened the door as quickly as he could, asking, "Have you got the water, brother?"

When Monkey came in and told them what had happened Sanzang said with tears in his eyes, "What are we to do, disciple?"

"I've come to take Brother Sand back to the hermitage with me," Monkey replied. "He'll fetch the water to save you while I fight that damned Taoist."

"If both you healthy ones go and abandon us invalids who will look after us?" Sanzang asked.

"Don't worry, venerable arhat," said the old woman who was standing beside them. "You won't need your disciples. We can look after you. We were very kind to you when you first came, and now that we have seen how that Bodhisattva can travel by cloud we know that you are arhats and Bodhisattvas. We could never possibly harm you."

"You women," snorted Monkey, "you wouldn't dare hurt anyone."

"You don't know your luck, my lord," the old woman replied with a smile. "If you'd gone to any other house you'd never have come out in one piece."

"What do you mean?" Pig groaned.

"All of us in this family are getting on," the old woman replied, "and desire doesn't bother us any more, which is why we didn't harm you. If you'd gone to another household with women of different ages the younger ones would never have let you go. They'd have forced you to sleep with them, and if you'd refused they'd have murdered you and cut all the flesh off your bodies to put in perfume bags."

"In that case I'd have been safe," said Pig. "The others smell lovely, just right for a perfume bag, but I'm a stinking boar and any flesh cut off me would stink too. I'd come to no harm."

"Stop boasting," said Brother Monkey with a smile, "and save your strength for the delivery."

"Fetch the water as soon as you can. Don't waste any time," the old woman said.

"Do you have a well—bucket on a rope I could borrow?" Monkey asked. The old woman went out to the back and brought in a bucket on a rope as well as a spare coil of rope that she handed to Friar Sand. "Take both ropes in case the well is so deep you need them," she said.

Chapter 53

Friar Sand took the bucket and the ropes, left the cottage with Monkey, and flew off on the same cloud. It took them less than an hour to reach Mount Offspring Dissolved, where they landed directly outside the gates of the hermitage. "Take the bucket and the ropes," Monkey told Friar Sand, "and hide over there. Let me challenge him to battle. When the fight's going good and strong sneak in, fetch the water, and take it back."

Friar Sand accepted his orders.

Brandishing his iron cudgel the Great Sage Sun went up to the gates and shouted, "Open up! Open up!"

When the gate—keeper saw him he hurried inside to report, "Master, Sun Wukong's here again. The Taoist master was furiously angry."

"That evil ape is utterly impossible. I've long heard of his powers and now I know what they really are. That cudgel of his is unbeatable."

"Master," said the other Taoist, "his powers may be great, but you're as good as he is. You are a match for him."

"He beat me the last two times," said the master.

"Yes," said the other, "but that was just because he went for you with such fury. You tripped him up with your hook twice when he was trying to draw water, so that leveled the score, didn't it? He had to run away. If he's back now it must be because he's had to. I expect Sanzang's been complaining too much as his pregnancy's so far advanced. I'm sure that he's feeling resentful of his master. You're absolutely bound to win this time, master."

This pleased the Taoist immortal and made him feel very cheerful as he went out through the doors. His face was wreathed in smiles, his manner imposing, and his hook in his hands. "Wicked ape, what are you back here for?" he shouted.

"Just to fetch some water," Monkey replied.

"It's my well," said the immortal, "and even if you were a king or a minister you'd still have to made me presents and offer mutton and wine before I gave you any. On top of that you're my enemy. How dare you come here empty–handed expecting water?"

"Do you refuse to give me any?" Monkey asked.

"Yes," said the immortal, "I won't."

"Vicious and evil beast," Monkey yelled, "if you won't give me the water, take this!" He dropped his guard to strike hard with his cudgel at the immortal's head. The immortal dodged the blow and struck back with his hook. It was an even finer combat than the previous one.

The gold–banded cudgel,

The As–You–Will hook,

And two fighters filled with hatred and anger.

Chapter 53

The flying sand and stones darkened earth and sky;

The clouds of dust and dirt made sun and moon seem sad.

The Great Sage was fetching water to save his master;

That the evil immortal refused for his nephew's sake.

Both sides fought with equal vigor

In their battle that allowed no rest.

They struggled for victory with tight – clenched jaws,

Gritting their teeth as they strove to win.

With growing skill

And ever – greater vigor

They breathed out clouds to frighten gods and ghosts.

Noisily rang the clash of their weapons

As their battle cries shook the mountains and hills.

They were a whirlwind wrecking a forest,

A pair of murderous fighting bulls.

As the battle went on the Great Sage felt happier

And the Taoist immortal had ever more energy.

Each was determined to carry on the fight;

Neither would give up till the issue was resolved.

The two of them leapt around in their fight from the gates of the hermitage to the mountain slope. It was a long and bitter struggle.

When Friar Sand rushed in through the gates with the bucket in his hand the Taoist disciple blocked his way and asked, "Who do you think you are, coming to steal our water?" Friar Sand put down his bucket and ropes, brought out his demon – quelling staff, and struck at the Taoist's head by way of an answer. Because the Taoist could not

move out of the way fast enough the blow broke his arm and he fell to the ground, straggling to escape.

Chapter 53

"I was going to kill you, you evil beast," roared Friar Sand, "but seeing as you're human I feel sorry for you and I'll let you go. Now let me get my water." The Taoist crawled to the back of the hermitage thanking heaven and earth for his escape. Friar Sand then filled his bucket with water from the well, went out through the gates, rose up on his cloud, and called to Monkey, "I've got the water, brother. Spare him now, spare him."

Hearing this, Monkey held the hook at bay with his cudgel and said, "Listen to what I have to say. I was going to wipe all of you out, but you've broken no laws and your brother the Bull Demon King is a friend of mine.

The first time I came you tripped me up with your hook a couple of times and I couldn't get the water. I lured you out to fight me so that my fellow disciple could get some water. If I'd used my full powers I'd have killed several of you, never mind just one As – you – will Immortal. But it's better to spare life than to take it, so I'll let you live a few more years. Never ever try extortion on anyone who comes here for the water again."

The evil and foolish immortal moved and tried to hook Monkey once more, but Monkey avoided the hook, rushed at him, and shouted, "Don't move!" The helpless immortal fell head first to the ground and was unable to get up. The Great Sage picked up his As – You – Will hook, snapped it in two, then broke the two pieces into four, and threw them to the ground. "Damned beast," he said, "are you going to try any more nonsense?" The trembling immortal had to bear his humiliation in silence, and the laughing Great Sage rose up on his cloud.

There is a poem that testifies to this. It goes:

When true lead is melted it yields a true liquid;

If the true liquid is mixed right, true mercury hardens.

True mercury and true lead have no feminine quality;

Magic cinnabar and herbs are the elixir of immortality.

When a child is recklessly formed and a pregnancy results

The mother of earth succeeds without any effort.

Heresy is pushed over and orthodoxy honoured;

The heart's lord succeeds and returns in smiles.

The Great Sage set off his cloud and caught up with Friar Sand. They were very pleased to be returning with the magical water as they brought their cloud down at the cottage to find Pig leaning against the door and groaning with his big belly sticking out. "Idiot," said Monkey, stealing up on him, "when did you get yourself pregnant?"

"Stop teasing me," said the idiot in desperation.

"Did you fetch the water?" Monkey was going to keep the joke up but Friar Sand then arrived to report with a smile, "Here's the water."

Despite his agony Sanzang managed to lean forward in a kind of bow as he said, "Disciples, I'm very grateful to you." The old woman was pleased too, and the whole household came in to bow and say, "Bodhisattvas, Chapter 53

this is wonderful, wonderful." She fetched a drinking bowl of decorated porcelain, half filled it with the water, and handed it to Sanzang with the words, "Venerable sir, please drink it very slowly. One mouthful will be enough to end the pregnancy."

"I won't need a bowl," said Pig. "I'll drink the lot, bucket, rope and all."

"Venerable sir," the woman said, "don't give me such a terrible fright. If you drank the whole bucketful it would dissolve all your insides." This gave the idiot such a fright that he behaved himself and drank only half a bowlful too.

Within less time than it takes to eat a meal the two of them were in agony: their intestines felt as if they were being wrung out and gave several loud rumbles. After that the idiot could contain himself no

longer; he emptied his bowels and his bladder. The Tang Priest, also unable to contain himself, wanted to go to the lavatory.

"Master," said Brother Monkey, "you mustn't go anywhere you might be in a draft, If you catch a cold you may get milk fever." The woman then brought in two latrine buckets for the pair of them. When they had both used them several times the pain stopped and their stomachs gradually started to resume their normal size as the extra flesh and blood in them was dissolved.

The woman then cooked them some plain rice porridge to settle their stomachs. "Lady," said Pig, "my stomach's very strong, and it doesn't need settling. Boil me some water for a bath before I eat my porridge."

"You mustn't have a bath, brother," said Friar Sand. "Washing in he first month after childbirth can make you ill."

"That wasn't childbirth," said Pig, "just a miscarriage: nothing to worry about. I want a bath to clean up." The woman then boiled some water for them to wash their hands and feet. The Tang Priest could only manage two bowls of porridge while Pig downed a dozen or so and still wanted more.

"Idiot," said Monkey with a laugh, "don't eat so much. It wouldn't look pretty at all if you got a big belly like a sandbag."

"No problem," said pig, "no problem. I'm not a sow, so I don't need to worry about that." The women then went out to cook him some more rice.

"Will you give me the rest of the water?" the old woman asked the Tang Priest.

"Have you had enough of the water?" Monkey asked.

"My stomach's stopped hurting," said Pig, "and I'm sure the pregnancy's completely finished. As I'm fine now I don't need any more."

"As they're both better now we'll give you the water," said Monkey. The woman thanked him and buried the water in a glazed jar behind the house.

"That jar of water will be enough to pay for my coffin," she told the rest of her family, who were all delighted.

A vegetarian meal was prepared, tables and chairs were set out, and the monks dined. They took their time over the meal then retired for the night.

Chapter 53

The next morning they thanked the old woman and her family and left the cottage. Sanzang mounted the horse, Friar Sand shouldered the luggage, the Great Sage Monkey led the way, and Pig held the bridle. This had been a case of

Rinsing away the evil and leaving the body pure,

Dissolving the mortal foetus to restore the natural self.

If you don't know what else happened in that country listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 54

The Buddha – Nature Traveling West Enters Womankind

The Mind – Ape Makes a Plan to Escape from the Beauties

When Sanzang and his disciples left the cottage they headed West, and about a dozen miles later they entered the country of Western Liang. "Wukong," said the Tang Priest on his horse, "there is a city not far ahead, and I can hear a great hubbub of voices from the marketplace. You must all be very, very careful and on your best behavior. Do not make nonsense of the teachings of our Buddhist faith by running wild or becoming infatuated." The three disciples were determined to obey his instructions.

Before the Tang Priest had finished speaking they reached the street leading in from the Eastern gate.

Everyone they saw was wearing a skirt and a woman's jacket, a powdered face and oiled hair. All the people, young and old, were women. When those buying and selling in the street saw the four of them coming they started to applaud, laugh and say with smiles all over their faces, "Men, men!" Sanzang was so alarmed that he reined in his horse, unable to go any further forward. In a moment the streets

were packed and the air was ringing with happy voices.

"I'm a gelded pig, a gelded pig!" yelled Pig in a panic.

"Stop that nonsense, idiot," said Monkey. "Just show them your face the way it used to be." Pig then shook his head a couple of times, stuck up his ears shaped like reed fans, twisted his bristly, dropping snout and give a roar that made all the women collapse with fright. There is a poem to prove it that goes, The monk came to Western Liang on his way to the Buddha;

The streets were a feminine world where males were not seen.

Peasants, scholars and artisans, merchants and fisherfolk,

Woodcutters, tillers and stock－raisers－ －all were women.

The beauties poured into the streets to welcome the men;

Young women come in crowds to hail the handsome groom.

If Wuneng had not made full use of his hideous face,

The pilgrims could not have withstood a siege by the ladies.

The women were then all so frightened that they dared not approach.

Clutching their hands, stooping, shaking their heads, chewing at their fingers, trembling and shaking they blocked the streets to look at the Tang Priest. The Great Sage Monkey also pulled a hideous face to clear a way for them, helped by grimaces from Friar Sand. Leading the horse, pig stuck out his snout and was flapping his ears. As they moved forward they saw that the buildings along the city streets were well－built and the shop fronts imposing. There were grocers and corn －chandlers, bars and teahouses, multi－storied shops where everything was sold, towers and fine mansions with well－draped windows.

Master and disciples turned one corner to come up against a female official standing in the street and shouting. "Envoys from afar, you may not enter the city gates without permission. Please go to the

government post station and register your names so that I can report them to Her Majesty. When they have been examined you will be allowed to proceed." Hearing this, Sanzang dismounted and saw that the words MALE—WELCOMING POST STATION were written on a board across the door of the official building.

"Wukong," said the venerable elder, "what the village people told us was true. There really is a Male—welcoming Post Station."

"Brother Pig," chuckled Friar Sand, "you'd better look in the Pregnancy—revealing Spring to see if you have a double reflection."

"Stop trying to make a fool of me," said Pig. "I aborted after drinking the water from Miscarriage Spring.

What would I need to look for?"

"Watch your words, Wuneng, watch your words," said Sanzang, turning back to give Pig his instructions before going forward and greeting the official.

She led them into the main hall of the post station, where they sat down and tea was sent for. Here too the staff all had their hair in bunches and wore skirts. There were many smiles as the tea was brought. A little later, when it had been drunk, the official gave a slight bow as she sat there and asked, "On what business have you emissaries come?"

"We are envoys sent to the Western Heaven by the Great Tang emperor in the East to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures," Monkey replied. "My master Tang Sanzang is the Tang emperor's younger brother. I am Sun Wukong, his senior disciple, and these two are my fellows, Zhu Wuneng, Pig, and Sha Wujing, Friar Sand. If you count the horse there are five of us altogether. We are carrying a passport with us that we beg to have inspected so that we may be allowed to continue on our way."

When the woman official had finished writing all this down she dropped to her knees to kowtow to them and said, "Forgive me, my lords. I am only the superintendent of the Male—welcoming Post Station and I did not realize that you were gentlemen from a superior country who deserved to be met at a great distance from here." She rose to her feet and ordered the staff to provide them with food and drink. "Please make yourselves comfortable, my lords, while I go into the city to report to our queen. Then your document will be dealt with

and you will be seen on your way West with rich presents." Sanzang was happy to sit there.

The superintendent neatened her clothes and went straight into the city to the Tower of Five Phoenixes at the palace entrance, where she said to the gate officer, "I am the superintendent of the Male −welcoming Post Station and I would like an audience with Her Majesty on a certain matter." The gate officer reported this to the queen at once, at which the superintendent was summoned straight to the throne hall to be asked what it was she had come to say.

"Your humble subject," she replied, "has received in her post station Tang Sanzang the younger brother of the Tang emperor in the East. He has three disciples called Sun Wukong, Zhu Wuneng and Sha Wujing and a horse, making five of them altogether. They wish to go to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. I have come especially to submit a memorial to Your Majesty asking whether they may be allowed to submit their passport for approval and proceed on their way."

The queen was delighted at his report, and she said to her civil officials, "We dreamed last night of a gold screen shining with colours and a jade mirror full of light. They must have been good omens of what has happened today."

The women officials crowded round the steps of the throne and said with kowtows, "Your Majesty, how can you tell that they were good omens for today?"

"This man from the East," the queen replied, "is the younger brother of the Tang emperor. Since primal chaos was first cleared we have never seen a man in our country under all the queens who have reigned here. The fortunate arrival of the Tang emperor's younger brother must be a gift from Heaven. I have decided to use our country's wealth to persuade the emperor's brother to become king with me as his queen. Then we can unite the male and the female and produce sons and grandsons to pass the throne on to. So weren't they good omens?" The joyful women officials all performed dances of obeisance.

"Your Majesty's idea of passing the throne on to future generations in an excellent one," the superintendent of the post station further submitted, "but the three hideous disciples of the emperor's younger

brother are not at all attractive."

"What does the emperor's brother look like," the queen asked, "and how are the disciples so unattractive?"

"The emperor's brother has a handsome face and an impressive bearing," the superintendent replied. "He really does look like a man from a great country ruled by a heaven－sent dynasty, a son of China in the Southern Jambu continent. But the three disciples look thoroughly vicious with faces like demons."

"In that case," said the queen, "give presents to his disciples, return their passport, and send them on their way to the Western Heaven. Keep only the emperor's brother here. Is there any reason why we should not?"

To this the officials bowed low and replied, "Your Majesty's ideas are completely right and your subjects will respectfully implement them. The only difficulty is that we have no matchmaker to arrange the marriage. As the old saying goes

Marriage and mating depend on red leaves;

A matchmaker ties the threads between husband and wife.

"From what you suggest," the queen replied, "the royal tutor should be invited to be matchmaker, and the superintendent of the Male －welcoming Post Station will be the mistress of ceremonies. Go to the post station and ask for the consent of the emperor's younger brother. When he has agreed we shall go out of the city in our carriage to greet him." The tutor and the superintendent left the palace to carry out their instructions.

Sanzang and his disciples were just enjoying a vegetarian meal in the hall of the post station when someone was heard outside announcing the arrival of the queen's tutor and the superintendent.

"Why is the queen's tutor here?" Sanzang asked.

"Perhaps it's an invitation from the queen," said Pig. "It's either that or

a proposal of marriage," said Brother Monkey.

"But if she tries to force me to marry her and refuses to let us go what am I to do, Wukong?" Sanzang asked.

"Just agree, Master," said Monkey. "I'll find a way to cope."

Before, they had finished their conversation the two women officials entered and bowed low to the venerable elder, who returned their courtesies and said, "I am a humble monk. What wonderful powers do I have that you should bow to me thus?"

The queen's tutor was discreetly delighted with his noble bearing, thinking, "Our country will indeed be very fortunate if this man is to become our queen's husband." When the two officials had finished bowing they stood on either side of Sanzang and said, "Imperial brother, many, many congratulations."

"I am a monk," Sanzang replied, "so what good fortune is there to congratulate me on?"

Bowing again, the queen's tutor said, "This is Womanland of Western Liang, and no man has ever come here before. As Your Excellency the emperor's brother has graced us with your presence I am here on the orders of Her Majesty the queen to propose marriage."

"Good gracious!" said Sanzang. "I have come to your distinguished country with no children apart from my three boorish disciples. Which of them is it that Her Majesty wishes to marry?"

"I have just been to the palace to report," the superintendent of the post station said, "and our queen was very, very happy. She said that last night she had an auspicious dream in which a golden screen shone with many colours, and a jade mirror was full of light. When she learned that Your Excellency the emperor's brother was a man from the great land of Tang she decided to offer you all the wealth of our country to persuade you to stay here as her husband and sit on the throne. Her Majesty would become queen consort. The royal tutor was commissioned to act as matchmaker and I was made mistress of ceremonies. We are here to ask for your hand." At this Sanzang bowed his head in silence.

"A true man does not throw away his chance," the queen's tutor said. "There is nothing unusual about a man being asked to marry a woman and live in her house, but rarely does it happen that one is offered the wealth of a state to do so. I beg the emperor's brother to assent

quickly so that I may report back to Her Majesty." The venerable elder seemed to have been struck dumb.

Chapter 54

752

Journey to the West

Pig, who was standing beside them, put his hands to his snout and called, "Tutor, please report back to Her Majesty that my master is an arhat who has long cultivated the Way. He's not interested in your country's wealth or in Her Majesty's great beauty. Hurry up and return our passport and send him on his way to the West. You can keep me here to be her husband. What about it?" The suggestion made the tutor tremble. She was speechless with shock.

"You may be a man," the superintendent said, "but you are much too ugly for Her Majesty."

"You don't understand," said pig. "Thick willow twigs make dustpans and fine ones make funnels. There's a use for everything. There's not a man in all the world who's really ugly."

"Idiot," said Monkey, "stop that nonsense. Let our master decide. If he agrees the wedding is on, and if he doesn't it's off. Don't waste the matchmaker's time."

"Wukong," said Sanzang, "you decide."

"If you ask me," Monkey replied, "you'd be very well off here. As the old saying goes, A thousand miles can't keep apart

A couple that's fated to wed:

Their lives and destinies are tied

By a long and invisible thread.

Where else will you find a place that offers you this much?"

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "if we stay here out of a love for wealth and status who will go to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures? Would that not be a terrible thing to do to our Great Tang emperor?"

"Your Excellency," the royal tutor replied, "I must tell you the truth. Our queen only intends to marry you, the emperor's brother. Your

three disciples will be invited to the wedding banquet, given presents, have their passport returned, and be allowed to go on their journey to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures."

"What the royal tutor says is right," replied Monkey. "We three mustn't make difficulties. We'll let our master stay here as the queen's husband. Hurry up and return us our travel document so that we can be on our way West. We will pay our respects to Her Majesty on our way back with the scriptures, and ask for some money for the journey back to the Great Tang."

The royal tutor and the superintendent both bowed to Monkey and said, "We are very grateful to you, sir, for your helpfulness."

"Tutor," said Pig, "don't just talk about feeding us. Now that we've agreed, get your mistress to lay on a banquet so that we can all drink a cup of betrothal wine. What about it?"

Chapter 54

"Yes, yes," said the tutor, "a banquet will be provided." The superintendent and the tutor returned in great delight to report back to the queen.

Sanzang meanwhile grabbed Monkey and started abusing him. "You're trying to kill me, you ape. How could you say things like that? Making me stay here to be her husband while you go to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha! I'd die before I agreed to do that."

"Don't worry, Master," said Monkey. "Of course I know your nature. But faced with people like that in a place like this I had to play them at their own game."

"What do you mean by playing them at their own game?" Sanzang asked.

"If you had been obstinate and refused her she would not have returned our travel paper or let us continue on our way," Monkey replied. "If she had turned vicious and called on all her underlings to slice your flesh off to make perfume bags or whatever we'd never have earned a good reward. We'd have had to use our magic powers for subduing and killing demons. You know how hard we hit and how

murderous our weapons are.

Once we got going we'd have wiped out everyone in the whole country. But they're people, not demons, even if they are blocking our way. And all along this journey you've been good and merciful—
—you haven't killed a single soul. How could you bear to kill so many innocent people? That really would be evil."

"Wukong," replied Sanzang, "that is a very fine argument. But I'm afraid that when the queen takes me into her palace she will want me to perform my conjugal duties. I could not possibly lose my primal masculinity and ruin my conduct as a Buddhist monk, or let my true seed escape and destroy my status in the faith."

"As you have agreed to the marriage she is bound to treat you as king and come out in her carriage to fetch you," Monkey replied. "You must on no account refuse. Take your seat in the phoenix and dragon carriage, enter the throne hall, and sit on the throne facing South as monarch. Tell the queen to fetch her royal seals and write an invitation summoning us to court. Stamp our travel permit with the official seal and ask her to sign it herself and return it to us. Have a banquet laid on as a celebration for yourself and the queen and to say farewell to us too. When the banquet is over have the carriage got ready and tell her that when you have seen us three out of the city you will be coming back to sleep with her. This will put the queen and her subjects into such a good mood that they won't try to keep us any more, let alone have any evil intentions towards us. When you have escorted us out of the city, get out of the carriage. Tell Friar Sand to stay with you and help you mount the white horse while I use some immobilizing magic to stop the queen and her subjects from moving.

Then we can carry on West along the main road, and when we've been travelling for a day and a night I'll say a spell to undo the magic and revive them so that they can go back into the city. This way none of them will be killed and you won't have to harm your essential spirit. This is what they call a plan to 'slip through the net with a false marriage.' It works both ways, doesn't it?"

These words sobered Sanzang up and woke him from his dream. He forgot his worries and thanked Monkey profusely: "I am profoundly grateful to you, good disciple, for your brilliant suggestion." Now that the four of them had agreed on a plan we shall leave them discussing it.

The queen's tutor and the post station superintendent went straight

through the gates of the palace to the steps of the throne without waiting to be summoned. "Your Majesty's auspicious dream was completely justified,"

they announced. "You two will be as happy together as fish and water."

Chapter 54

754

Journey to the West

When the queen heard their report she lifted the pearl curtain, came down from her dragon throne, and gave a smile that opened her cherry lips and showed her silvery teeth as she asked in her charming voice, "What did the emperor's brother say when you spoke to him?"

"When we reached the post station and had bowed to the emperor's brother," the queen's tutor replied, "we told him of the proposal of marriage. He tried to decline it, but fortunately his senior disciple agreed on his behalf. He would like his master to marry Your Majesty and sit on the throne as king. He asked that you should first return their passport and send the three disciples on their way West. When they come back with the scriptures they will pay their respects to their master and Your Majesty and ask for some money for their journey back to Great Tang."

"What did the emperor's brother say to that?" the queen asked with a smile.

"He did not speak," the tutor replied, "but he is willing to marry Your Majesty. The only thing is that his second disciple wants a betrothal feast first."

When the queen heard this she ordered the office that dealt with foreign relations to lay on a banquet. She also had the state carriage prepared to take her out of the city to welcome her lord and husband. The female officials obediently swept the palace clean and laid on a banquet in the hall. Those who were setting out the banquet moved as fast as fire, and those who were preparing the chariot did so with the speed of shooting stars. Western Liang was a country of women, but its state carriage was no less splendid than a Chinese one: Six dragons snorting out coloured clouds,

A pair of phoenixes full of good omen.

The six dragons supported the carriage as it came out,

The pair of phoenixes were riding upon it.

Fragrant were the perfumes,

Dense the clouds of auspicious vapor.

Officials with goldfish – shaped pendants of jade now crowded around; The women were all drawn up with their hair full of ornaments.

Mandarin – duck fans gave shade to the carriage,

While curtains of jade and pearl did shelter the queen.

Beautifully sounded the songs to the panpipes

While strings and woodwinds all played in harmony.

A surge of joy soared up to the heavens;

Boundless bliss poured out from the heart.

Chapter 54

The triple silken canopy shook the sky;

Brilliant banners cast their light on the throne steps.

Never before had the marriage cup here been drunk;

Today the queen would be taking a husband.

The carriage soon left the city and reached the Male – welcoming Post Station. At once the queen's arrival was announced to Sanzang and his disciples, who straightened up their clothes and came out to meet the queen's carriage. The queen raised the curtain and came out. "Which of these gentlemen is the Tang emperor's brother?" she asked.

"The gentleman in front of the post station who is wearing a long gown," the tutor replied. The queen took a very careful look at him with her phoenix eyes, her moth – eyebrows raised. He was indeed an

exceptional sight. Look at him:

A noble manner,

Distinguished features.

White teeth as if made of silver,

A square – cut mouth with lips of red.

The top of the head flat, the forehead broad and ample;

Fine eyes, a clear brow, and a long jaw.

His ears had the round lobes of a great man;

His body was that of one with no ordinary talent.

A handsome, intelligent and gallant gentleman;

The ideal consort for the graceful queen.

As the queen was gazing at him with delight and admiration she felt a great surge of desire and passion.

Opening her cherry lips she said, "Younger brother of the Great Tang emperor, won't you ride in my royal carriage?" This made Sanzang blush from ear to ear. He was too embarrassed to look up at her.

Pig, who was standing beside him, put his hands to his snout and devoured the queen with his eyes. She was a slim beauty:

Brows like green willow,

Flesh like mutton fat,

Cheeks set off with plum blossom,

Hair like the plumage of a golden phoenix.

The autumn waves of her eyes were full of charm;

Like bamboo shoot in spring was her graceful posture.

Red tassels floated with elegance over her temples,

Pearls and kingfisher feathers adorned her high – piled hair.

Why talk now of the Princess Zhaojun's beauty?

This queen is lovelier than the legendary Xi Shi.

As her willow waist gently bends gold pendants tinkle;

Her lotus feet move lightly with her limbs of jade.

The Lady of the Moon could not compare with her;

No heavenly fairy could be her match.

Her exquisite palace clothes were not those of a mere mortal;

She was the Queen Mother of the West come to the Jade Pool.

Seeing how beautiful she was the idiot could not help drooling. His heart pounded and his limbs went weak; he melted like a snow lion next to a bonfire.

When the queen came closer to Sanzang she took hold of him and said in a most beguiling voice, "Dear emperor's brother, won't you come into my dragon coach, ride back with me to the throne hall and marry me?"

The venerable elder trembled, feeling unsteady on his feet. It was as if he were drunk or stupefied.

"Don't be so shy and modest, Master," urged monkey, who was standing beside him. "Please get into the carriage with your future wife. Have our passport returned to us as soon as possible so that we can continue on our journey to fetch the scriptures." Sanzang could not bring himself to reply as he put his hand on Monkey, unable to hold back his tears.

"Don't be so upset, Master," Monkey said. "Here's your chance to enjoy wealth and honour, so make the most of it." Sanzang had no choice but to do as Monkey bade him. Wiping his tears away he forced himself to smile as he stepped forward to

Chapter 54

Hold the queen's white hand

Sitting in the dragon carriage.

The queen was in raptures at the prospect of a husband;

The elder in his terror wanted only to worship the Buddha.

One longed to embrace her man in the candle－lit bedroom;

The other wanted to see the

World－honoured on Vulture Peak.

The queen was sincere,

The holy monk was pretending.

The queen in her sincerity

Hoped that they would grow old in harmony together.

The holy monk pretending

Controlled his tender feeling to nourish his primal spirit.

One was so happy to see her husband

She wished they could be man and wife in broad daylight.

The other was afraid of woman's beauty,

Longing to escape her clutches and climb to the Thunder Monastery.

The two ascended the carriage together,

But the Tang Priest's intentions were far away.

When the civil and military officers saw their mistress enter the royal coach with the venerable Sanzang sitting beside her their faces were all wreathed in smiles. The procession turned around and went back into the city. Monkey told Friar Sand to carry the luggage while he led the horse as they followed behind the coach.

Pig rushed wildly ahead, and when he reached the Tower of Five Phoenixes he started shouting, "This is very fine and splendid, but it won't do, it won't do at all. We've got to have some wedding drinks to toast the groom."

He so alarmed the women officials carrying ceremonial insignia who were leading the procession that they all went back to the queen's carriage to report, "Your Majesty, the one with big ears and a long snout is making a row in front of the Tower of Five Phoenixes and demanding wedding drinks."

Chapter 54

758

Journey to the West

On hearing this the queen leant her fragrant shoulder against Sanzang, pressed her peach–blossom cheek against his, and opened her sandalwood–scented mouth to murmur in her seductive voice, "Dear emperor's brother, is the one with big ears and a long snout one of your distinguished disciples?"

"He is my second disciple," Sanzang replied. "He has an enormous appetite, and he has spent all his life trying to get good things to eat. We must lay on some food and drink for him before we can get on with things." The queen then asked anxiously if the office dealing with foreign relation had yet prepared the banquet.

"It is ready," the women officials reported. "It is set out on the Eastern hall and includes both meat and vegetarian dishes."

"Why both sorts?" the queen asked.

"Your subjects thought that the Tang emperor's brother and his distinguished disciples might be vegetarians,"

the officials replied. "That was why we had both sorts of food provided."

"Dear emperor's brother," said the queen with another little laugh of pleasure as she rubbed herself against Sanzang's fragrant cheek, "do you eat meat or vegetarian food?"

"I eat vegetarian food," Sanzang replied, "but I have never given up wine. We must have a few cups of light wine for my second disciple to

drink."

Before he had finished speaking the queen's tutor said to the queen, "If it pleases Your Majesty, will you come to the Eastern hall for the banquet? Today is an auspicious day, and at a lucky hour tonight you may marry the emperor's brother. Tomorrow a new ecliptic begins, and I beg that the emperor's younger brother will enter the throne hall tomorrow to take his throne facing South as monarch and inaugurate a new reign."

The queen was delighted by this suggestion. Descending from the coach hand—in—hand with Sanzang she went in through the palace's main gate. This is what they saw and heard: Magic music wafting down from a gallery,

As the turquoise carriage came within the palace.

The phoenix gates stood wide open amid gentle light;

The harem in all its splendor was not closed.

Incense smoke curled aloft in the unicorn hall;

Shadows were moving behind the peacock screen.

The buildings were magnificent as those of a mighty state;

The jade halls and golden horses were even more splendid.

Chapter 54

759

Journey to the West

When they reached the Eastern hall the harmonious sounds of panpipes and singing could be heard and two rows of powdered beauties seen. In the middle of the hall two sumptuous banquets were set out; a vegetarian one to the left and a meat one on the right. Below were two rows of individual places. The queen folded back her sleeves, took a jade goblet with her ten delicate fingers, and led Sanzang to the feast. Monkey went up to her and said, "We are all vegetarians, so would you ask my master to sit at the vegetarian feast to the left while three places are set below him for us three disciples?"

"Yes, that's right," said the queen's tutor. "Master and disciples are like father and sons. It would be wrong to seat them side by side." The

women officials quickly rearranged the seating, and the queen gave goblets to each of them as she led them to their places. Monkey gave the Tang Priest a look to remind him to return her courtesies, at which he came down from his seat with a jade goblet in his hand and led the queen to her place.

The civil and military officials all kowtowed to the queen in gratitude and took their seats in order of precedence on either side. Only then did the music cease and the toasts begin.

Pig did not worry about anything as he relaxed his belly and ate for all he was worth. He did not care whether it was jadeflake rice, steamed buns, sweet cakes, mushrooms, gill fungus, bamboo shoots, tree–ear fungus, day lilies, agar, laver, turnips, taro, devilpepper, yams or sealwort: he wolfed the whole lot down together.

Then he drank some six or seven goblets of wine and shouted, "Fill it up, bring me another. I want a big goblet. Give me a few more drinks, then we can all go off and do what we've got to do."

"What is there so important that makes us have to leave this fine banquet?" Friar Sand asked.

"There's an old saying," replied the idiot with a grin, "'that each man should stick to his trade. Some of us are getting married now, and others of us have to be on our way to fetch the scriptures. We mustn't ruin everything for the sake of a few more drinks. We want our passport returned as soon as possible. As they say,

'The warriors stay on their horses, all of them pressing ahead.'" When the queen heard this she sent for big cups, and the officials in attendance quickly fetched some parrot–shaped goblets, cormorant ladles, golden baskets, silver beakers, glass chargers, crystal dishes, immortals' bowls and amber goblets. Ambrosial liquor was now served out and everybody drank of it.

Sanzang then bowed, rose to his feet, put his hands together in front of his chest and said to the queen, "Your Majesty, I am very grateful for this sumptuous banquet. We have had enough now. Could you now go to the throne hall and return the passport so that I may see the three of them off from the city tomorrow morning?"

Doing as he asked, the queen led Sanzang by the hand as they ended the banquet and climbed the steps to the throne hall, where she invited the Tang Priest to sit on the throne.

"No," he said, "it would be wrong. As Your Majesty's tutor said, a new ecliptic begins tomorrow: only then will I dare to take the throne. Today the passport must be stamped so that they can be sent on their way."

The queen accepted his suggestions, sat on the dragon throne again, had a gilt chair placed to the left of it for Sanzang to sit on, and told the disciples to bring the passport. The Great Sage asked Friar Sand to open the cloth wrapper and take it out, then offered it with both hands to the queen, who examined it carefully. At the top were nine stamps from the Great Tang emperor's seals, and underneath were the seals of the countries of Elephantia, Wuji and Tarrycart. When she had looked at them the queen said with a delightful, tinkling smile in her voice, "Is your surname Chen, emperor's brother?"

"My lay surname was Chen," he replied, "and my religious name is Xuanzang. It was when the Tang emperor in his wisdom and mercy took me as his younger brother that he granted me the surname Tang."

"Why do your illustrious disciples' names not appear on the passport?" the queen asked.

"My three stupid disciples are not men of Tang." Sanzang replied.

"But if they are not from Tang why have they come here with you?" the queen asked again.

"My senior disciple," Sanzang answered, "was originally from the country of Aolai in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body. My second disciple is from Gao Village in Stubet in the Western Continent of Cattle – gift.

My third disciple is from the Flowing Sands River. They were all punished for offences against the laws of Heaven until the Bodhisattva Guanyin delivered them from their sufferings. Since then they have been converted to the faith and have volunteered to escort me on my journey to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven to redeem their past crimes. I won each of them during the journey, which is why their religious names have not been entered on the passport."

"Would you like me to add their names to it?" said the queen.

"If that is Your Majesty's pleasure," Sanzang replied. The queen then sent for brush and inkstone, and when she had rubbed the ink-stick on the stone to produce a thick and fragrant ink with which she filled the hairs of her writing brush she wrote the names of the three disciples--Sun Wukong, Zhu Wuneng and Sha Wujing--at the bottom of the passport. Then she stamped it fair and square with her royal seal, wrote her signature, and handed it down to Monkey, who told Friar Sand to wrap it up again carefully.

The queen then presented them with a dish of small pieces of gold and silver, came down from her throne and said to Monkey, "You three must take this to help with the costs of your journey and go to the Western Heaven as quickly as you can. When you come back with the scriptures we shall richly reward you again."

"We are men of religion," said Brother Monkey, "and we do not accept gold and silver. There will be places along the way for us to beg food from." Seeing that they were not going to accept it the queen had ten bolts of damask and brocade brought out that she gave to Monkey with the words, "You are in such a hurry that we do not have time for this to be made up. Please take this to have some clothes made on the journey to keep you warm."

"We monks may not wear damask or brocade," Monkey said. "We are only allowed to cover ourselves with cotton cloth." Seeing that he would not accept the silk either, the queen ordered that three pints of rice be brought out to provide them with a meal on their journey. The moment Pig heard the word "rice" he took it and put it with the bundles of luggage. "Brother," Monkey said to him, "the luggage is very heavy now. Will you be able to carry the rice as well?"

"You wouldn't know that rice is best eaten the same day it's cooked," Pig replied. "One meal and it'll be finished." He then put his hands together in thanks.

"May I trouble Your Majesty to come with me while I escort my disciples out of the city?" Sanzang asked.

"When I have given them some parting instructions about their journey West I shall come back to enjoy perpetual glory with Your Majesty. Only when I am freed from these cares and worries will we be able to join together like a pair of phoenixes." Not realizing that this was a trick, the queen sent for her coach and climbed into it,

leaning her fragrant shoulder against Sanzang as they rode Westwards out of the city. Bowls has been filled with clean water and fine incense put in all the burners. This was because the people were seeing their queen in her carriage and also because they were seeing a man, the emperor's younger brother. All of them, young and old alike, were women with powdered and lovely faces, and green – black hair piled high in cloud coiffures. The coach was soon out of the town and outside the Western gate.

Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand, joined in a common cause, neatened up their clothes and went to meet the carriage. "There is no need to escort us a long way, Your Majesty. We shall take our leave of you here."

Chapter 54

761

Journey to the West

Sanzang stepped down from the royal carriage, raised his hands together to the queen, and said, "Please go back now, Your Majesty, and allow me to fetch the scriptures." When the queen heard this her face went pale with shock. She grabbed hold of the Tang Priest and said, "Dear emperor's brother, I have offered you the wealth of my realm to become my husband. Tomorrow you are going to take the throne as monarch, and I am going to be your consort. We have already eaten the wedding feast. How can you go back on your word now?"

This was too much for Pig, who went wild. Thrusting his snout about and waving his ears he rushed to the royal coach shouting. "What would monks like us want to marry a powdered skeleton like you for? Let my master go!" This rough and violent behavior so frightened the queen that her souls all went flying and she collapsed in the coach. Friar Sand pulled Sanzang out of the crowd and helped him mount the horse. Just then a woman shot forward from the roadside shouting, "Don't go, Tang emperor's brother. You and I are going to make love."

"You ignorant, wicked creature," Friar Sand shouted at her, striking at her head with his staff. The woman then made a whirlwind that carried the Tang Priest off with a great roar. He had disappeared without shadow or trace. Indeed

He escaped from the net of beauties

To encounter a lecherous ogress.

If you don't know whether the woman was a human being or a monster, or whether the master lived or died, then listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 55

The Tang Priest Is Tempted with Sex and Debauchery

Because His Nature Is Upright He Resists Unharmed

The story tells how the Great Sage and Pig were just about to use their magic to immobilize all the women when they suddenly heard the noise of a wind. Friar Sand, who was shouting, looked round at once to find the Tang Priest gone.

"Who's taken the master?" Monkey asked.

"A woman made a whirlwind and carried him off in it," Friar Sand reported. At this news Monkey jumped up with a whoosh to stand on his cloud and shade his eyes as he looked all around. He saw the gray dust cloud of a whirlwind that was heading Northwest.

"Brothers," he turned back to shout, "come straight up on your clouds. We're going after the master." Pig and Friar Sand tied the luggage on the horse and both sprang noisily into the air.

All this gave such a fright to the queen of Western Liang and her subjects that they fell to their knees in the dust and said, "He is an arhat who has flown away in broad daylight. Do not be alarmed, Your Majesty. The Chapter 55

Tang emperor's brother is a dhyana monk who has mastered the Way. We were too blind to see who this man of China really was, and we allowed ourselves all that longing for nothing. Please ride back to the palace in your carriage, Your Majesty." The queen felt ashamed as she went back into her capital with her officials, and we shall say no more of them.

Monkey and the other two disciples meanwhile were riding their clouds through the air after the whirlwind.

They chased it to a high mountain, where the gray dust settled and the wind fell, so that they did not know which way the demon had gone. The brothers brought their clouds down to land to search for the way.

Suddenly they noticed a gleaming rock shaped like a screen. Leading the horse round behind it they found a pair of stone doors above which was written:

DEADLY FOE MOUNTAIN PIPA CAVE

In his ignorance Pig went up to the doors and was about to beat on them with his rake when Monkey rushed forward to stop him. "Don't be in such a hurry, brother," he said. "After following the whirlwind we had to look around for a while before we found these doors. We don't know what's behind them. If they're the wrong doors we'd stir up trouble offending the wrong people, and we don't want to do that. You two take the horse round to the front of the rock screen and wait a moment. I'm going to take a look around and find out what's happening here. Then it'll be much easier to know what to do."

Friar Sand liked this idea. "Splendid, splendid," he said, "You've found the subtle solution when things were looking rough, the calm way out of the crisis." The two of them then led the horse to the other side of the rock screen.

Monkey then showed his magic powers. Making a spell with his hands and saying the words he shook himself and turned into an exquisite bee. Just look at him:

Fine wings bending in the wind,

A narrow waist gleaming with the sun.

With his sweet mouth he searched for stamens,

While the sting in his tail killed toads.

Great was his achievement in making honey,

And he always entered the hive with courtesy.

Now be would use a brilliant plan

As he flew in under the eaves of the doorway.

Monkey squeezed in through the crack between the outer doors then

past the inner doors to see a female monster sitting in a flower pavilion with serving girls in brightly – coloured embroidered clothes and their hair sticking upwards in two bunches. They were all very pleased, but he could not hear what they were talking about. Monkey flew up to them very quietly, perched on the lattice of the pavilion, and cocked his ear to Chapter 55

listen. He saw two women with their tangled hair tied in a bun carrying two piping hot dishes of food to the pavilion and saying, "Madam, this dish has steamed rolls with human flesh in them, and that one has vegetarian ones with sweet beanpaste fillings."

"Little ones," said the she – devil with a smile, "Bring the Tang emperor's brother out." Some of the serving girls in embroidered clothes went to the room at the back to help the Tang Priest out. His face was sallow, his lips white, and his eyes red as the tears streamed down his face, "The master's been drugged," thought Monkey with a silent sigh.

The she – devil went down from the pavilion and showed her ten fingers that were as delicate as spring onions as she grabbed hold of Sanzang and said, "Don't worry, emperor's brother. This may not be as rich and splendid as the palace in the Womanland of Western Liang, but it's peaceful and comfortable, and an ideal place for reciting the Buddha's name and reading the scriptures. With me as your companion we'll be able to live in harmony till we're a hundred." Sanzang said nothing.

"Don't be upset," the she – devil said. "I know that you had nothing to eat or to drink at your banquet in Womanland. Here are two dishes, one of meat and one of vegetarian food. Won't you take some to calm your nerves?"

Sanzang thought deeply: "If I say nothing and eat nothing, this she – devil may murder me. She is worse than the queen, who was at least human and knew how to behave. What am I to do? My disciples don't know that I'm a prisoner here. If I let her murder me I'll be throwing my life away for nothing." Though he racked his brains he could find no other plan, so he pulled himself together and asked, "What is the meat dish and what is the vegetarian one?"

"The meat one is steamed rolls stuffed with human flesh, and the

vegetarian one steamed rolls with sweet fillings," the she – devil replied.

"I would like some of the vegetarian ones," said Sanzang.

"Servant girls," said the she – devil, "bring hot tea and give your master some vegetarian steamed rolls." A servant girl then brought in a tray of tea that she set before the Tang Priest. The she – devil broke a vegetarian roll open and handed it to Sanzang, who offered a whole meat one to her. "Why won't you open it for me, emperor's brother?" the she – devil asked with a smile.

"I am a man of religion, so I would not dare to break meat food," said Sanzang.

"In that case," said the she – devil, "Why did you eat wedding cake at the Motherhood River, and why are you insisting on eating beanpaste now?"

To this Sanzang replied,

"When the river is high I'm carried away.

When bogged down I have to slow down."

Chapter 55

Monkey, who could hear from his perch in the lattice just how friendly their conversation was getting, started worrying that the master's true nature might become disturbed. It was more than he could bear, so he resumed his own appearance and brandished his cudgel with a shout of "Behave yourself, you evil beast." When the she – devil saw him she spat out smoke and light that covered the pavilion and told her underlings to shut the Tang Priest away.

Then she seized her steel trident and leapt out through the door of the pavilion, shouting abusively, "Hooligan ape! How dare you sneak into my house to set your dirty eyes on me! Stay where you are and take this!" The Great Sage parried the lunge from her trident and fell back, fighting all the way.

When they came to the outside of the cave where Pig and Friar Sand

were waiting, the sight of the hard – fought battle so alarmed Pig that he led the white horse over to Friar Sand and said, "Look after the horse and the luggage. I'm joining in." The splendid idiot then raised his rake with both hands and rushed forward with a shout, "Stand back, brother, while I kill this vicious beast." Seeing Pig coming the she – devil used another kind of magic to breathe fire out of her nose and smoke from her mouth as she shook herself and charged him with her trident flying and dancing. Goodness only knows how many hands she had as she somersaulted towards them, lashing out furiously. Monkey and Pig were both fought to a standstill.

"Sun Wukong," said the she – devil, "you don't know when to keep your head down. I know who you are, but you don't recognize me. Even your Tathagata Buddha from the Thunder Monastery is afraid of me. Where do you think you two little wretches are going to get? Come here, all of you, and watch me beat every one of you." It was a fine battle:

Great was the she – devil's prowess

As the Monkey King's anger rose.

Then Marshal Tian Peng joined in the fight,

Showing off wildly wielding his rake.

One was a many – handed mistress of the trident,

Surrounding herself with smoke and with light;

The other two were impatient and their weapons powerful,

As they stirred up many a cloud of mist.

The she – devil was fighting to win a mate,

But the monk would never lose his vital seed.

Ill – matched male and female fought it out,

Each showing heroism in the bitter struggle.

Calmly the female had built up her strength, longing for action;

The male was on guard in his love of pure stillness.

This made peace between them impossible

As trident fought for mastery with cudgel and rake.

Powerful was the cudgel,

Even stronger the rake,

But the she–devil's trident was a match for them both.

Nobody would yield on Deadly Foe Mountain;

No mercy was given outside Pipa Cave.

One was happy at the thought of the Tang Priest as a husband;

The other two were going with him to collect the scriptures.

Heaven and earth were alarmed by the battle,

Which darkened sun and moon and displaced all the stars.

When the three of them had been fighting for a long time without anyone emerging as victor, the she–devil shook herself and used the sting in her tail to jab the Great Sage in the head. Monkey yelled in agony at the unbearable pain and fled, defeated. Seeing that things were going badly Pig withdrew too, dragging his rake behind him. The victorious she–devil put her steel trident away.

Monkey had his hands round his head and his face screwed up in agony as he shouted, "It's terrible, it's terrible."

"Brother," said Pig, going up to him, "why did you run away howling in pain just when you were fighting so well?"

"It's agony, agony," groaned Brother Monkey, still holding his head.

"Is it an attack of your migraine?" Pig asked.

"No, no," said Monkey, hopping around in pain.

"But I didn't see you get wounded," said Pig, "so how can your head be hurting?"

"It's unbearable," groaned Monkey. "Just when she saw that I was beginning to beat her trident she braced herself and jabbed me in the head. I don't know what weapon she used, but it's made my head ache so unbearably that I had to run away, beaten."

"In quiet places you're always boasting that your head was tempered in the furnace," said Pig with a laugh, "so why was that too much for you?"

Chapter 55

"Yes," replied Monkey, "after my head was refined I stole the magic peaches and immortal wine and Lord Lao Zi's golden elixir tablets. When I made havoc in Heaven the Jade Emperor ordered the Strongarm Demon King and the Twenty eight Constellations to take me to be beheaded at the Dipper and Bull Palace. The gods used their cutlasses, axes, hammers and swords on me, struck me with thunderbolts and burned me with fire.

Then Lao Zi put me in his Eight Trigrams Furnace and refined me for forty−nine days. None of that harmed me at all. Goodness only knows what weapon that woman used to make my head hurt like this."

"Put your hands down and let me have a look," said Friar Sand. "Has it been cut open?"

"No, no," said Monkey.

"I'd better go back to Western Liang to get you some ointment to put on it," said Pig.

"It's not cut open or swollen; I don't need ointment," said Monkey.

"Brother," laughed Pig, "I wasn't at all ill when I was pregnant or after I lost the baby, but you've got a carbuncle on your forehead."

"Stop teasing him, brother," said Friar Sand. "It's getting late, our eldest brother's been wounded in the head, and we don't know whether the master is dead or alive. What on earth are we going to do?"

"The master's all right," groaned Brother Monkey. "I flew in as a bee

and saw the woman sitting in a flower pavilion. Before long two servant girls came in with two dishes of steamed rolls, one with fillings of human flesh and one with sweet fillings of beanpaste. She sent two other serving girls to help the master come out to eat something to soothe his nerves. She was talking about being his companion. At first he wouldn't reply or eat any of the rolls, but she was giving him so much sweet talk that he said he'd have a vegetarian one.

Goodness knows why. The woman broke one open and gave it to him, and he passed her an unbroken meat one. 'Why won't you open it for me?' She asked, and he said, 'I am a man of religion, so I would not dare to break meat food.' Then she said, 'In that case, why did you eat wedding cake at the Motherhood River, and why are you eating sweet fillings now?' The master did not catch what she was driving at, and replied, 'When the river is high I'm carried away; when bogged down I have to slow down.' Listening to all this from the lattice I got worried that the master was going to forget himself, so I turned back into myself and hit at her with my cudgel. She used magic too, breathed out clouds, told them to shut the master away, and drove me out of the cave with her trident."

Friar Sand bit his finger and said, "That low bitch must have followed us at some stage, she knows so much."

"From what you say," said Pig, "we mustn't rest. From dusk to the middle of the night we've got to keep going back and challenging her to fight. We'll have to yell and make such a din that she can't go to bed or have it off with our master."

"I can't go back," said Monkey. "My head's hurting too badly."

"We can't challenge her to battle," said Friar Sand. "Our eldest brother's head is aching and our master is a true monk. He won't let the illusion of sex disturb his nature. Let's spend the light sitting somewhere under the mountain that's sheltered from the wind. Then we can build up our energy and think of something else in the morning." The three brother disciples tethered the white horse and guarded the luggage as they spent the night resting under the slope of the mountain.

Chapter 55

The she－devil then put aside thoughts of murder and started to wear a mile again as she said, "Little ones, shut the front and back doors tight." Then she sent out two scouts to keep an eye on Monkey, and ordered them to report the moment any sound was heard at the door. "Maids," she commanded, "tidy the bedroom and get it ready. Bring candles, burn incense, and ask the Tang emperor's brother in. I'm going to make love with him."

The Tang Priest was then helped out from the back, while the she－devil, looking utterly bewitching, took him by the hand and said, "As the saying goes, pleasure's worth more than gold. You and I are going to have some fun as man and wife."

The venerable elder clenched his teeth and let out not a sound. He would have preferred not to go with her but he was afraid she might kill him, so in fear and trembling he accompanied her into the bridal chamber, he was as if stupefied and dumb. He would not lift his head and look up, let alone catch sight of the bed and the curtains in the room, and even less did he see the intricately carved furniture or her hairstyle and clothing. He was deaf and indifferent when she spoke of her desire. He was indeed a fine monk: His eyes saw no evil beauty,

His ears heard no voluptuous words.

To him the brocade and the lovely face was dung,

The gold, the jewels and the beauty so much dirt.

The love of his life was contemplation;

He never took a step from Buddha land.

He did not care for female charms,

Knowing only how to nourish his true nature.

The she－devil

Was full of life

And unbounded desire.

The venerable monk

Seemed almost dead,

His mind fixed on meditation.

One was soft jade and warm fragrance;

The other was dead ash and withered wood.

One spread open the bridal sheets,

Full of voluptuousness;

The other fastened his tunic more tightly,

His heart ever true.

One longed to press her breasts against him and entwine their limbs In rapturous union;

The other wanted only to sit facing the wall

Like the monk Bodhidharma.

The she – devil took off her clothes,

Displaying her smooth skin and fragrant body;

The Tang Priest pulled his robes together,

Covering the roughness of his hide and flesh.

The she – devil said,

"There is room on my pillow and under my sheet:

Why not come to bed?"

The Tang Priest replied,

"My head is shaven and I wear monk's robes:

I may not join you."

She said, "I would like to be Liu Cuicui in the story."

He replied, "But I am not like the Monk of the Moonlight."

The she – devil said, "I am more lovely than Xi Shi herself."

"Long was the king of Yue buried on her account," the monk replied.

"Do you remember the lines," the she – devil asked,

"'I'm willing to die and be buried under flowers;

Even as a ghost shall I live and love?'"

To this the Tang Priest replied,

"My true masculinity is my great treasure;

I could not lightly give it to a bag of bones like you."

The two of them kept up their battle of words till it was late in the night, and the Tang Priest's resolution was unmoved. The she – devil kept tugging at his clothes, refusing to let go of him, while the master kept up his resistance. The struggle went on till the middle of the night, when the she – devil finally lost her temper and called, "Bring rope, little ones." Sadly she had her beloved man tied up like a dog and dragged outside to the portico. Then the silver lamps were blown out and everyone went to bed for the night.

Before they knew it the cocks had crowed three times. On the mountainside the Great Sage Monkey leaned forward and said, "This head of mine ached for a while, but now it doesn't hurt or feel numb. It's just a bit itchy."

"If it's itchy then what about letting her jab it again for you?" said Pig with a grin.

"We've got to make her let him go," said Monkey, spitting.

"'Let him go, let him go,'" mocked Pig. "I bet our master spent last night having a go."

"Stop arguing, you two," said Friar Sand. "It's light now. We've got to capture that demon as quickly as we can."

"Brother," said Monkey, "you stay here and look after the horse. Don't move. Pig, come with me."

The idiot braced himself, tightened the belt round his black cotton tunic and went with Monkey as each of them leapt up to the top of the car and arrived beneath the stone screen, weapon in hand. "You stand here,"

said Monkey. "I'm afraid that the she – devil may have harmed the master during the night, so wait while I go in and find out. If he was seduced by her into losing his primal masculinity and ruining his virtue then we'll all split up. But if he kept his spirit firm and his dhyana heart was unmoved we'll have to hold out till we've killed the she – devil and rescued the master. Then we can head West."

"Idiot!" said Pig. "As the saying goes, can a dried fish be a cat's pillow? Even if she didn't succeed she'll have had a good grab at him."

"Stop talking such nonsense," said Monkey. "I'm going to have a look."

The splendid Great Sage took his leave of Pig and went round the rock screen. Then he shook himself, turned back into a bee, and flew inside, where he saw two serving girls sound asleep with their heads pillowed on their watch – keepers' clappers and gongs. When he reached the flower pavilion he found that the devils were still asleep, exhausted after being up half the night, and not aware that it was dawn. Monkey then flew on to the back of the cave, where he could half hear Sanzang's voice. He looked up to see the master with his hands and feet all roped together under the portico. Landing lightly on Sanzang's head he said, "Master."

Recognizing his voice, Sanzang said, "Is that you, Wukong. Rescue me!"

"Did you have a good time last night?" Monkey asked.

"I would have died first," Sanzang replied through clenched teeth.

"Yesterday it looked to me that she was in love with you," Monkey continued, "so why has she been torturing you like this?"

"She pestered me for half the night," Sanzang replied, "but I never undid my clothes or even touched the bed.

She only tied me up and left me here when she saw that I was not going to give in to her. Whatever happens you must rescue me so that I can go and fetch the scriptures." By now their conversation had woken the she–devil up. Ferocious though she was she still could not bear to lose Sanzang.

As she woke up and sat up she heard him saying "fetch the scriptures," rolled straight out of bed, and shrieked, "What do you want to go and fetch scriptures for instead of being my husband?"

This alarmed Monkey, who left the master, spread his wings, flew out, turned back into himself, and shouted for Pig. The idiot came round the stone screen and asked, "Well? Did it happen?"

"No," laughed Monkey, "it didn't. She kept pawing him but he wouldn't go along with her, so she lost her temper and tied him up. Just when he was telling me what had happened the fiend woke up and I had to rush out in a panic."

"What did the master say?" Pig asked.

"He told me that he never undid his clothes," Monkey replied, "and never even touched the bed."

"That's wonderful," said Pig. "He's a true monk. Let's go and save him."

The idiot was too crude to bother with arguing: he lifted his rake and brought it down with all his might against the doors, smashing them to pieces. This gave the serving girls who were asleep with their heads pillowed on their watch–keepers' clappers and gongs such a fright that they ran to the inner doors shouting,

"Open up! The two ugly men who came here last night have smashed the front doors down."

The she–devil was just coming out of her bedroom when four or five serving girls came rushing in to report,

"Madam, the two ugly men who were here yesterday have come back and smashed the front doors down."

On hearing this the she–devil ordered, "Little ones, boil water at once for me to wash and comb my hair."

Then she told them, "Carry the emperor's brother roped up as he is and lock him up in the back room. I'm going out to fight them."

Out went the splendid monster, brandishing her trident and shouting abusively, "Vicious ape! Dirty hog!

Ignorant beast! How dare you come knocking down my doors!"

"Filthy whore," Pig retaliated, "you tie our master up and then you have the nerve to talk tough like that. You tried to seduce our master into being your husband. Give him back now and we'll spare your life. If there's so much as a hint of a 'no' from you this rake of mine will smash your whole mountain down."

The demon did not allow any more argument but summoned up her spirits and used the same magic as before to breathe out smoke and fire as she thrust at Pig with her steel trident. Swerving aside to avoid the blow, Pig struck back with his rake. When Monkey joined in to help him with his cudgel the she–devil used more magic to give herself endless pairs of hands with which to parry their weapons to left and to right. When they had fought four or five rounds the mystery weapon jabbed Pig in the lip, making him flee for his life, dragging his rake behind him and pressing a hand to his mouth. Monkey, who was also rather scared of her, feinted with his cudgel and fled in defeat too. The she–devil went back into her cave in victory, telling her underlings to build up a temporary outer barrier with rocks.

Chapter 55

771

Journey to the West

Friar Sand heard piggish groans as he was pasturing the horse and looked up to see Pig coming towards him with his hand on his face and moaning. "What's up?" Friar Sand asked.

"It's terrible, terrible," the idiot groaned, "the pain, the pain."

He was still complaining when Monkey turned up too, saying with a grin, "Idiot! Yesterday you wished me a carbuncle on my forehead, and today you've got one on your lip."

"I can't bear it," groaned Pig, "it's agony, it's excruciating."

Just as the three of them were at a loss as to what to do an old woman came by with a green bamboo basket carrying wild vegetables from the hills to the South. "Brother," said Friar Sand to Monkey, "that woman's coming this way. I'll ask her who this evil spirit is and what weapon she has that causes such terrible wounds."

"You stay here while I go and ask her," Monkey said, and taking a quick look he saw that there was a halo of auspicious cloud directly above the old woman's head, and that fragrant mists were all around her.

Recognizing who it was, Monkey called out, "Come and kowtow, brothers. This lady is the Bodhisattva." This so surprised them that Pig kowtowed despite his pain, Friar Sand bowed low as he held the horse, and Monkey fell to his knees and called, "I submit to The Merciful and Compassionate Deliverer from Suffering, the Miraculously Responding Bodhisattva Guanyin."

Seeing that they had recognized her, the Bodhisattva rose up into midair on her auspicious cloud and appeared in her true form as the carrier of the fish basket. Going up into the sky with her, Monkey kowtowed and reported, "Bodhisattva, please forgive your disciple for failing to come to meet you. Because we were so busy trying to save the master we did not realize that you had come to see us. We are now up against a monster we can't beat, and we beseech you, Bodhisattva, to help us."

"She is indeed a very terrible monster," the Bodhisattva replied. "Her trident is really the two claws she was born with, and what causes such agonizing wounds is a sting in her tail called 'horse—killer poison'. She was originally a scorpion spirit who used to listen to the Buddha preaching the scriptures on the Thunder Monastery. When the Tathagata Buddha saw her and mistakenly tried to push her away with his hand she used her tail to sting him on his left thumb. The Buddha in his pain told one of the vajrapanis to arrest her and she is now here. You will have to ask someone else for help as I too have to keep my distance from her."

Monkey then bowed again and said, "I beg the Bodhisattva for further instructions. Please tell your disciple whom I should go to see to ask for help."

"Go to the Palace of Light inside the Eastern Gate of Heaven and look for the Star Officer of the Pleiades. He will be able to subdue her." Having spoken she turned into a beam of golden light and went

straight back to the Southern Ocean.

The Great Sage Monkey then brought down his cloud and said to Pig and Friar Sand, "Don't worry, brothers.

Our master has a star to save him."

"Where?" Friar Sand asked.

"The Bodhisattva has just told me to ask the help of the Star Officer of the Pleiades," Monkey said. "I'm off."

"Brother," groaned Pig, his hand still on his mouth, "please ask the star lord for some ointment to stop this pain."

Chapter 55

"You don't need any ointment," laughed Monkey. "After a night's pain it'll get better, just as mine did last night."

"Stop all that talk," said Friar Sand, "and get there as fast as you can."

The splendid Monkey set off at once on his somersault cloud and was outside the Eastern Gate of Heaven in an instant. The Heavenly King Virudhaka suddenly appeared to greet him courteously and ask, "Where are you going, Great Sage?"

"I want to go to the Palace of Light to see the Star Lord of the Pleiades because the Tang Priest I'm escorting to the West to fetch the scriptures is being pestered by a devil," Monkey said. Then the four marshals Tao, Zhang, Xin and Deng appeared to ask Monkey where he was going.

"I'm looking for the Star Officer of the Pleiades to subdue a demon and rescue my master," he said.

To this they answered, "The star officer has gone on an inspection to the Star–viewing Tower today at the Jade Emperor's command."

"Is that true?" Monkey asked.

"We left the Dipper and Bull Palace with him," Heavenly Lord Xin said, "and we would not dare lie about it."

"He has been gone for a long time," Heavenly Lord Tao said, "so he may be back by now. Great Sage, you would do best to go to the Palace of Light first, and if he is not back, go on to the Star–viewing Tower."

This delighted the Great Sage, who took his leave of them and went to the gate of the Palace of Light. Finding that the star officer was indeed not there he was just about to leave when he noticed a column of soldiers outside. Behind them was the star lord returning in his court dress sewn with golden thread. This is how he looked:

The Five Peak pins in his hat gleamed gold;

The mountain and river tablet he held was of the finest jade.

The Seven Stars hung from his waist amid clouds and mist;

Bright were the rings of jade on his Eight–pole sash.

His pendants chimed with a rhythmical sound;

The wind rushing past made a noise like bells.

The Star Officer of the Pleiades came holding his kingfisher fan; While clouds of heavenly incense filled the hall.

When the soldiers in the front ranks saw Monkey standing outside the Palace of Light they hurried back to report, "My lord, the Great Sage Sun is here." The star officer put away his clouds and tidied his court dress, then when the attendants carrying his insignia of office stood aside to left and right he stepped forward to greet Monkey courteously and ask, "Why are you here, Great Sage?"

"I have come especially to pay my respects and beg you to rescue my master from disaster," Brother Monkey replied.

"What disaster, and where?" the star officer asked.

"He is in the Pipa Cave on Deadly Foe Mountain in Western Liang," Monkey replied.

"What evil monster is there in the cave that you should need to send for me?" asked the star officer.

"The Bodhisattva Guanyin appeared to us just now," Monkey said, "and told us that she is a scorpion spirit.

She specially mentioned you, sir, as the only person who would be able to control her. That is why I have come here to ask your help."

"I would have preferred to submit a memorial to the Jade Emperor," the star officer replied, "but as you have come here, Great Sage, and as I am much obliged to the Bodhisattva for recommending me I would not like to lose any more time. Excuse me if I don't offer you tea: let's go down to subdue the demon. I can report back to His Majesty on my return."

At that the Great Sage went out with the star officer through the Eastern Gate of Heaven and straight back to Western Liang. Seeing Deadly Foe Mountain not far off, Monkey Pointed to it and said, "That's the mountain." The star lord brought his cloud down and went with Monkey to the slope in front of the stone screen.

"Get up, brother," said Friar Sand to Pig on seeing them. "Brother Monkey is back with the star officer."

"Forgive me," said the idiot, his hand still pressed over his mouth, "forgive me, but I'm too ill to pay you all the courtesies."

"But you are one who cultivates his conduct," the star lord said. "How can you be ill?"

"The she–devil jabbed me in the lip when I was fighting her," Pig replied, and it still hurts."

"Come here," said the star lord, "and I'll cure it for you."

Only then did the idiot put his hands down as he groaned, "Please, please cure it for me. I'll pay you well when it's better." The star lord then touched his lip and blew on it, at which the pain stopped. A delighted Pig went down on his knees and kowtowed to the star lord. "Wonderful, wonderful," he said.

"Will you touch my head too?" asked Monkey with a smile.

"Why?" the star lord asked. "You weren't jabbed with the poison."

"I was yesterday," said Monkey, "and it only stopped hurting after last night. It's still rather numb and itchy and may be bad again when the weather turns overcast, which is why I would like you to cure it." The star officer then touched and blew on his head too, thus removing the remaining poison and stopping the numbness and itching.

Chapter 55

"Brother," said a wrathful Pig, "let's go and fight that vicious creature."

"Yes, yes," the star lord said, "you two call her out so that I can put her in her place."

Monkey and Pig leapt up the slope and went round the stone screen once more. Yelling insults the idiot used his hands like picks and hit with his rake to clear a way through the wall of stones that had been built outside the mouth of the cave. Once through these outer defenses he struck again with his rake to smash the inner doors to sawdust, giving the little devils behind them such a shock that they ran inside to report, "Madam, those two hideous men have smashed the inner doors now." The she–devil had just had the Tang Priest untied and sent for some vegetarian breakfast for him when she heard the inner doors being smashed. Leaping out of her flower pavilion she thrust at Pig with her trident. He parried with his rake while Monkey joined in the fight from the side. The she–devil went right up to them and was just going to use her vicious trick when the two of them, who now knew what she was about, turned and fled.

As soon as the two of them were round the rock Monkey shorted, "Where are you, star lord?" The star lord stood up at once on the mountainside in his original form as a giant rooster with twin combs. When he raised his head he was six or seven feet tall, and as soon as he crowed the monster reverted to her true appearance as a scorpion spirit the size of a pipa mandolin. When the star officer crowed again the monster's whole body crumbled in death. There is a poem as evidence that goes,

With fancy combs and a tasseled neck,

Hard claws, long spurs and angry eyes,

Nobly he leaps, complete in all his powers,

Towering majestic as three times he cries.

He is no common fowl who by a cottage crows

But a star down from the sky in all his glory.

Vainly the vicious scorpion took a human form:

Revealed now as herself she ends her story.

Pig went forward and said, one foot planted on the monster's back, "Evil beast, You won't be able to use your horse—killer poison this time." The monster did not move, whereupon the idiot pounded her to mincemeat with his rake. The star lord gathered his golden light around him once more and rode away on his cloud.

Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand all raised their clasped hands to Heaven in thanks.

"We have put you to much trouble," they said. "We shall go to your palace to thank you another day."

When the three of them had finished expressing their gratitude they bot the luggage and the horse ready and went into the cave, where the young and old serving girls were kneeling on either side saying, "My lords, we Chapter 55

are not evil spirits but women from Western Liang who were carried off by the evil spirit. Your master is sitting in the scented room at the back crying."

On hearing this Monkey took a very careful look around, and seeing that there were indeed no more devilish vapors he went round to the back and called, "Master!" The Tang Priest was very pleased indeed to see them all there.

"Good disciples," he said, "I have put you to such a lot of trouble. What has happened to that woman?"

"That damned female was really a scorpion," said Pig. "Luckily the Bodhisattva Guanyin told us what to do.

Brother Monkey went to the palaces of Heaven to ask the Star Lord of

the Pleiades to come down and defeat the demon. I've beaten her to pulp. That's why we dared to come right inside to see you, Master."

The Tang Priest thanked them deeply. They then looked for some meat—free rice and noodles and laid on a meal for themselves that they ate. The kidnapped women were all taken down the mountain and shown the way back home. Then they lit a firebrand and burned down all the buildings there before helping the Tang Priest back on his horse and continuing along the main road West. Indeed: They cut themselves off from worldly connections,

Turning away from the lures of desire.

By pushing right back the ocean of gold,

In their minds and their hearts their awareness was higher.

If you don't know how many years were to pass before they finally won their true achievement, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 56

The Spirit Goes Wild and Wipes Out the Bandits

The Way in Confusion Sends the Mind—Ape Away

As the poem goes,

The heart that is empty of all things is said to be pure,

In utter placidity not giving rise to a thought.

The ape and the horse must be tethered, not left to run wild;

The spirit must always be cautious, not seeking for glory.

Wake up to Three Vehicles, wipe out the Six Bandits,

And all human destinies then become clear.

Extinguish the evil of sex and rise to enjoy

The pleasures of paradise that can be found in the West.

The story tells how Tang Sanzang bit on the bullet, straggled with all his powers to preserve the purity of his body and was rescued from the Pipa Cave when Monkey and the others killed the scorpion spirit. There is nothing to tell about the next stage of their journey, and it was soon summer again. What they saw was Fragrant winds carrying the scent of wild orchids,

New bamboo cool as the skies clear after rain;

No travelers to pick artemisia on the hillside,

And the fragrant flowers of cattails filling the streams.

Bees are bewitched by pomegranates' beauty,

While siskins delight in the willow trees' shade.

How can the wayfarers offer dumplings to Qu Yuan?

Dragon boats should be mourning his death in the river.

Master and disciples were just enjoying the early summer scenery as they spent the day of the Dragonboat Festival without being able to celebrate it when a high mountain rose in front of them to block their way forward. Sanzang reined in his horse and turned back to say, "Be careful, Wukong: I'm worried that there may be demons on that mountain ahead."

"Don't worry, Master," said Brother Monkey. "We are all faithful believers. I'm not scared of demons." This reply pleased the venerable elder greatly, who

Whipped on his noble charger,

Gave the dragon steed his head.

Chapter 56

Before long they were above a rock – face on the mountain, and when

they raised their heads to look around this is what they saw:

Cypress and pine that touch the azure heavens,

Creepers climbing up hazels on the cliffs.

A hundred thousand feet high,

A thousand sheer – cut strata.

A hundred thousand feet high are the towering pinnacles;

A thousand sheer – cut strata of the chasm's sides.

Mosses and liverwort cover damp rocks,

Locust and juniper form a great forest.

Deep in the forest

Birds are heard unseen,

Singing their songs with beautiful voices.

The water in the brook is a torrent of jade;

The fallen blooms by the path are piles of gold.

The mountain is steep,

The going is hard,

And hardly a pace is on level ground.

Foxes and David's deer come in twos;

White stage and black gibbons greet one in pairs.

The bowl of the tiger fills one with terror;

The call of the crane resounds through the sky.

Plum and red apricot provide one with food;

No names can be put to the many wild flowers.

Chapter 56

After climbing the mountain slowly for a long time the four of them crossed the summit, and on the Western slopes they saw a stretch of level sunlit ground. Pig put on a great show of energy, telling Friar Sand to carry the luggage while he raised his rake in both hands and tried to drive the horse ahead. But the horse was not afraid of him and carried on at the same slow pace despite all the noises he made to speed it up.

"Why are you trying to make the horse go faster, brother?" Monkey asked. "Let it walk slowly at its own speed."

"It's getting late," Pig replied, "and I'm hungry after that day on the mountain. We'd better get a move on and find a house to beg some food from."

"In that case let me speed him up," said Monkey waving his gold −banded cudgel and shouting, at which the horse slipped its halter and started to gallop along the track with the speed of an arrow. Do you wonder why the horse was afraid of Monkey but not of Pig? It was because five hundred years earlier Monkey had been given a post in the Imperial Stables in the Daluo Heaven as Protector of the Horses; the name has been passed on right till the present day, which is why all horses are still afraid of monkeys. The venerable elder could not keep hold of the reins: he simply held tight to the saddle and gave the horse its head as it galloped six or seven miles towards some farm land before slowing down to a walk.

As Sanzang was riding along he heard a gong being struck as over thirty men armed with spears, swords and staves emerged from both sides of the track to block his way and say, "Where do you think you're going, monk?" This made the Tang Priest shake with fright so badly that he lost his seat and fell off the horse.

"Spare my life, Your Majesty," he pleaded as he squatted in the undergrowth by the path, "Spare my life."

The two chiefs of the gang then said, "We're not going to kill you. Just give us your money." Only then did the venerable elder realize that they were bandits. As he raised his head to look at them this is what he saw: One's blue face and protruding fangs were worse than an evil god's: The other's bulging eyes were like the Star of Death.

The red hair at their temples seemed ablaze;

Their brownish bristles were as sharp as needles.

Both wore berets of tiger skin.

And kilts of marten fur.

One carried a cudgel with wolf—tooth spikes,

The other a rope of knotted rattan.

They were no less terrible than mountain tigers,

And just as frightening as dragons from the waters.

On seeing how murderous they looked Sanzang could only rise to his feet, put his hands together before his chest, and say, "Your Majesties, I have been sent by the Tang emperor in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. It has been many years since I left Chang'an and all my travelling money was finished long ago. We monks may only support ourselves by begging— —we don't have any money. I beg you, Your Majesties, to show charity and allow me to pass." The two bandit chiefs led their men forward and said, "We here are tigers. The only reason we stop travelers on the main roads is to get rich. Charity doesn't come into it.

If you've got no money, take your clothes off and give us that white horse, then we'll let you go on your way."

"Amitabha Buddha!" said Sanzang. "This habit of mine was begged piece by piece, a bit of cloth from one family and a needle from another. If you take it you will be killing me. If you act as tough guys in this life you'll be reborn as animals in the next."

One of the bandit chiefs was so infuriated by this remark that he started to wave his cudgel about and went up to Sanzang to strike him. Unable to speak, Sanzang could only think, "Poor man, you may think you've got a cudgel: wait till you find out about my disciple's." The bandit was in no mood for argument as he raised his cudgel and started to lay about Sanzang. Sanzang, who in all his life had never

told a lie, in this desperate crisis had to make one up now: "Don't hit me, Your Majesties. I have a young disciple following behind me who'll be here soon. He has several ounces of silver that he'll give to you."

"Don't hurt the monk," said one of the bandit chiefs. "Tie him up." The crowd of bandits then fell upon him, roped him up, and suspended him high from a tree.

The three disaster–bringing spirits were still following behind. Pig was chuckling aloud as he said, "The master's been going very fast. I don't know where he's waiting for us." Then he saw Sanzang in the tree and said, "Just look at the master, He could have just waited if he'd wanted to, but he was in such high spirits he had to climb a tree and make a swing out of creepers."

"Stop talking nonsense," said Monkey when he saw what had happened. "The master's been hung up there, hasn't he? You two wait for a moment while I go up and look around."

The splendid Great Sage then rushed up the slope to look around and saw the bandits. "I'm in luck," he thought with glee, "I'm in luck. Business has brought itself to my front door." With that he turned round, shook himself, and turned into a trim little novice of only sixteen wearing a black habit and carrying a bundle wrapped in blue cotton cloth on his shoulder. Then he stepped out until he was by the master and called,

"Master, what's been happening? Who are these wicked people?"

"Rescue me, disciple," said Sanzang, "and stop asking so many questions."

"What's it all about?" Monkey asked.

"These highwaymen blocked my way and demanded money," Sanzang replied. "As I don't have any they hung me up here. I'm waiting for you to work something out. If you can't you'll just have to give them the horse."

"You're hopeless, Master," laughed Monkey. "Of all the monks in the world there can be few as soft as you.

When the Tang Emperor Taizong sent you to worship the Buddha in the Western Heaven he never told you to give that dragon horse away."

"Whatever was I to do when they hung me up here and were hitting me as they demanded things?" said Sanzang.

"What did you say to them?" Monkey asked.

"I was so desperate when they beat me that I had no choice: I had to tell them about you," Sanzang replied.

"Master," said Monkey, "you're useless. Why ever did you squeal on me?"

"I told them that you were carrying some money," said Sanzang. "I only did it in desperation to stop them beating me."

"Great," said Brother Monkey, "great. Thanks for the recommendation. That just how to squeal on me. You can do that seventy or eighty times a month if you like, and I'll do more business than ever."

When the bandits saw Monkey talking to his master they spread out to surround them and said, "Little monk, get out the money your master told us you're carrying inside your belt and we'll spare your life. But if you even try to say no, you're dead."

"Don't shout, gentlemen," said Monkey, putting his bundle down. "I've got some money in here, but not much — —only twenty horseshoe ingots of gold and twenty or thirty ingots of frosted silver, not counting the smaller pieces. If you want it I'll get the whole packet out as long as you don't hit my master. As the ancient book has it, 'Virtue is the root, and wealth is only the tip of the branch'. This is just the tip of the branch. We men of religion can always find a place to beg. When we meet a benefactor who feeds monks there'll be plenty of money and clothes for us. We don't need much at all. As soon as you've let my master down I'll give you it all."

When the bandits heard this they were delighted, and they all said, "The old monk is stingy, but this little monk is very generous. Let him down." Now that his life had been spared the venerable elder leapt on the horse and galloped back the way he had come, making good use of the whip and not giving Monkey another thought.

"You've gone the wrong way," Monkey called out in alarm, then picked up his bundle and started to run after him, only to find his way blocked by the bandits.

"Where do you think you're going?" they asked. "Give us your money or we'll have to torture you."

"Now we're on that subject," said Monkey, "we'll have to split the money three ways."

"You're a bit of a rascal, aren't you, little monk?" said one of the bandit chiefs. "You want to keep something without letting your master know. All right then. Bring it all out and we'll have a look at it. If there's a lot we'll let you keep a bit to buy fruit with on the side."

"That's not what I mean at all, brother," said Monkey. "I haven't got any money. What I mean is that you've got to give me a cut of the gold and silver you two have stolen from other people."

This infuriated the bandit chief, who shouted abusively, "You're asking for it, little monk. Wanting ours instead of giving us yours! Stay where you are and take this." He lifted his knotted rattan cane and brought it down on Monkey's head six or seven times.

Monkey pretended not to notice, and his face was wreathed in smiles as he said, "Brother, if you can only hit me like that you could still be hitting me at the end of next spring and you wouldn't really have hit me at all."

"You have a very hard head," exclaimed the shocked bandit.

"No, no, you overpraise me: I just get by with it," Monkey replied. With that the discussion was cut short as two or three of the bandits rushed at Monkey and started lashing out at him.

"Keep your tempers, gentlemen," said Monkey, "while I get it out."

The splendid Great Sage then felt in his ear and pulled out an embroidery needle. "Gentlemen," he said, "we monks really don't carry money with us. All I can give you is this needle."

"What lousy luck," said one of the bandits. "We've let the rich monk go and kept this bald donkey who's not got a penny to his name. I suppose you do tailoring. A needle's no use to us." On hearing that they did not want it Monkey held the needle in his hand, waved it, and turned it into a cudgel as thick as a rice bowl.

"Young you may be, little monk," said the terrified bandits, "but you certainly have some magical powers."

Monkey then thrust the cudgel into the ground and said, "If any of you gentlemen can move it it's yours." The two bandit chiefs rushed up to grab it, but they could no more move it than a dragonfly can move a stone pillar: it did not shift a fraction of an inch. How could those bandits have known that the gold–banded As–You–Will cudgel had been weighed on the scales of Heaven at 13,500 pounds? Then Monkey stepped forward, lifted it effortlessly, spun it in a writhing python movement, pointed it at the robbers and said,

"You're all out of luck: you've met Monkey."

The bandit chief rushed at him again and hit him another fifty or sixty times. "Your hands must be getting tired," said Monkey. "Let me hit you one now, but don't think this is the real thing." Watch him as he swings his cudgel, shakes it, and makes it as thick as the top of a well and seventy or eighty feet long. A single blow of it struck one bandit chief to the ground. He bit the dust and said no more.

"You're pretty cheek there, baldy," said the other bandit chief abusively. "You've got no money, and now you've killed one of us."

"Just a moment," said Monkey with a smile. "I'm going to kill every one of you and wipe you all out." With another swing of his cudgel he killed the other bandit chief, at which all their men threw down their spears and clubs and scattered in terror, fleeing for their lives.

The Tang Priest galloped Eastwards until Pig and Friar Sand stopped him and asked, "Where are you going, Master? This is the wrong way."

"Disciples," said Sanzang, reining in his horse, "go back and tell your brother to be merciful with that cudgel of his and not kill all the bandits."

"Stop here, Master," said Pig. "I'll go." The idiot ran straight back along the path, shouting at the top of his voice, "Brother, the master says you're not to kill them."

"Have I killed anyone?" Monkey asked.

Chapter 56

"Where have the bandits all gone?" said Pig. "They've all run away apart from the two chiefs. They're asleep here."

"You pox–ridden pair," said Pig, addressing them, "no doubt you had a hard night of it and were so exhausted that you had to choose this of all places to sleep." Walking closer to them he went on, "You're like me: you sleep with your mouths open and dribble."

"It's because I smashed the beancurd out of them with my cudgel," said Monkey.

"But people don't have beancurd in their heads," said Pig.

"I beat their brains out," said Monkey.

The moment he heard Monkey say that the idiot turned and rushed straight back to say to the Tang Priest,

"He's scattered them."

"Splendid, splendid," said Sanzang. "Which way did they go?"

"He hit them so hard he laid them out," Pig replied. "They can't go anywhere."

"Then what do you mean by scattering them?" Sanzang asked.

"He killed them," Pig replied. "If that isn't scattering their band, what else is it?"

"How did he hit them?" Sanzang asked.

"He hit two big holes in their heads," said Pig.

"Open the bundle," said Sanzang, "Take out a few coins, and buy some ointment somewhere to put on their wounds."

"You're not being at all sensible, Master," said Pig. "There's only any point in putting ointment on the wounds of people who are still alive. Why put it on gaping holes in people who are already dead?"

"Has he really killed them?" said Sanzang, losing his temper and beginning to mutter abusive remarks about monkeys and macaques as he turned the horse round and rode back with Friar Sand and Pig to where the dead men lay covered with gore, their heads pointing down the mountainside.

The sight was too much for the venerable elder. "Dig a grave for them with your rake and bury them," he told Pig, "while I say the *Burial Sutra* for them."

"You're giving the job to the wrong man, Master," complained Pig. "Monkey killed them, so Monkey ought to bury them. Why make me do the digging?"

Brother Monkey, who was already in a very bad mood after being told off by the master, shouted at Pig,

"Hooligan! Moron! Bury them at once. I'll hit you if you waste any more time." This so alarmed the idiot that he started digging with his rake. When he was three feet down he came to a layer of stones that the prongs of his rake could not shift, so he threw the rake aside and rooted about with his snout. In the softer earth he could get two and a half feet down with one push and five feet with two. He then buried the two bodies and piled up a tombmound above them.

"Wukong," said Sanzang, "fetch some incense and candles so that I can pray for them and recite sutras."

"You understand nothing," Monkey retorted, pouting. "We're in the

middle of the mountains with no village or inn for miles around. Where do you expect me to get candles and incense? There's nowhere I could buy them even if I had the money."

"Out of my way, ape," said Sanzang with fury, "I am going to scatter earth on the tomb, burn incense and pray."

Sanzang dismounted sadly by the tomb in the wild;

The holy monk prayed by the desolate grave.

These were the words of his invocation:

I bow to you tough guys and ask you to hear my prayer. I am from the land of Tang in the East. At the command of Emperor Taizong I was going to the West to fetch the scriptures when I met you gentlemen here.

I do not know what province, prefecture and county you came from to form your band in the mountains here. I spoke to you kindly and pleaded earnestly, but you paid no heed as you repaid good with wrath. Then you encountered Sun the Novice, who killed you with his cudgel. Out of consideration for your bodies left lying in the open I had them buried and a mound piled over them. I broke off some bamboo to serve instead of incense and candles; although they give no light, they come from a sincere heart. Only stones can I offer in place of food: they have no flavor, but they are given in honest faith. When you reach the Underworld to lodge your complaint and look for the roots of your misfortune, remember that his surname is Sun and mine is Chen: they are different. Know who it was who wronged you, just as you would know a debtor, and do not bring a case against the monk who is going to fetch the scriptures.

"You've shuffled off all the blame," said Pig with a laugh. "We two weren't there either when Monkey killed them."

Sanzang then picked up another pinch of earth and prayed again. "Tough guys, when you bring your case you must only indict Sun the Novice. It was nothing to do with Pig or Friar Sand."

When Monkey heard this he could not help laughing as he replied, "Master, you've got no finer feelings at all.

Goodness knows what efforts I've been to so that you can fetch your scriptures, but now that I've killed those two bandits you tell them to go and bring a case against me. It's true that I did kill them, but it was

only for you. If you hadn't set out to fetch the scriptures and I hadn't become your disciple I'd never have come here and killed them. I'm damned if I don't invoke them, too."

He took his iron cudgel, pounded the grave three times, and said, "Listen to me, pox—ridden bandits. You hit me seven or eight times, then seven or eight times again; you didn't hurt me or even tickle me at all, but you did make me lose my temper. One misunderstanding led to another and I killed you. You can bring a case against me wherever you like— —I'm not scared. The Jade Emperor knows me. The Heavenly Kings do as I say.

The Twenty—eight Constellations are afraid of me. The Nine Bright Shiners, the star lords, are scared of me.

The city gods of counties and prefectures kneel to me; the God of the Eastern Peak Who Is Equal to Heaven is terrified of me. The Ten Kings of the Underworld used to be my servants. The Five Fierce Gods were once my juniors. The five Commanders of the Three Worlds and the Officers of the Ten Directions are all my very good friends. So go and bring your case wherever you like."

Hearing Monkey speak in this most unpleasant way was another shock for Sanzang. "Disciple," he said, "my prayer was only intended to teach you to spare life and become good and kind. Why do you have to take this all so seriously?"

"This is not something to fool around with, Master," Monkey replied. "We must find somewhere for the night as soon as we can." The master had no choice but to hold in his anger and remount.

With the Great Sage Sun feeling disgruntled and Pig and Friar Sand also suffering from jealousy, master and disciples were only getting on together on the surface: underneath there was hostility. As they carried along their road Westwards a farmhouse came into sight to the North of the track. Pointing at it with the whip Sanzang told them that this was the place where they would find somewhere to spend the night.

"Very well," said Pig, and they went up to the farm to look at it. It was

a fine sight: Wild flowers on the paths,

Trees shading the doorways.

A mountain stream fell down a distant cliff;

Wheat and mallows grew in the fields.

The reeds moistened by dew were beds for the gulls;

Poplars in the wind were perches for weary birds.

Among blue cypress the pine's green was a rival;

Red rush competed with knotweed in fragrance.

Village dogs barked,

The cocks crowed at dusk,

Well – fed cattle and sheep were led back by boys.

Under clouds of smoke from the stoves the millet was cooked;

Now it was evening in the hill farm.

Chapter 56

785

Journey to the West

As the venerable elder went closer an old man came out through the gateway of the farm, noticed Sanzang, and greeted him. "Where have you come from, monk?" he asked, to which Sanzang replied, "I have been sent from the Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. As I am passing this way and it is getting late I have come to beg a night's lodging from you, benefactor."

"It is a very long way indeed from your distinguished country to here," the old man replied with a smile, "so how did you manage to cross so many rivers and climb so many mountains to get here by yourself?"

"I have three disciples who have come with me," Sanzang said. "Where are they?" the old man asked. "There they are, standing by the road," said Sanzang.

The old man looked up and was so appalled by their hideous faces that on the instant he turned to run back inside, only to be held back by Sanzang, who said, "Benefactor, I beg you in your mercy to let us spend the night here."

The old man was shivering, barely able to open his mouth, shaking his head and waving his arms around as he said, "Th...th... th...they're not human. They're e...e...evil spirits."

"Don't be afraid, benefactor," said Sanzang, putting on a smile. "They just grew ugly. They're not evil spirits."

"But my lord," said the old man, "one's raksha demon, one's a horse－faced devil, and one's a thunder god."

When Monkey heard this last remark he shouted at the top of his voice, "The thunder gods are my grandsons, the rakshas are my great－grandsons, and the horse－faced devils are my great－great－grandsons."

This sent the old man's souls flying as he paled and wanted to go in. Sanzang held him up as they went into the thatched main room of the house, and said with a forced smile, "Don't be afraid of him. They are all rough like that. They don't know how to speak properly."

As he was making his explanations a woman came out from the back holding a child of four or five by the hand. "What has given you such a fright, sir?" she asked.

"Bring some tea, wife," he said, and the woman let go of the child's hand and fetched two cups of tea from the inside. When the tea had been drunk Sanzang stepped down from his seat to greet her and explain, "I have been sent by Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. I had just arrived here and was asking for a night's lodging in your distinguished mansion when the sight of my three disciples' ugly faces gave the old gentleman rather a fright."

"If the sight of ugly faces gives you such a scare how would you cope if you saw a tiger or a wolf?" the woman said.

"Their ugliness I could take, wife," the old man replied. "What terrified me was the way they spoke. When I said they were like a raksha, a horse－faced devil and a thunder god one of them shouted that thunder gods were his grandsons, rakshas his great－grandsons, and horse－faced devils his great－great－grandsons. That was what really

terrified me."

"No need to be frightened," said Sanzang, "no need. The one like a thunder god is my senior disciple Sun Wukong. The one like a horse－faced devil is my second disciple Zhu Wuneng, or Pig. And the one like a raksha is my third disciple Sha Wujing, or Friar Sand. Although they are ugly they are all faithful Buddhists who believe in the true achievement. They are not evil monsters or vicious demons. They are nothing to be afraid of."

When the old man and his wife heard who Sanzang was and were told that the disciples were all devout Buddhists their nerves were finally somewhat calmed, and they told Sanzang to invite them in. The venerable elder went to the door to call them over, then told them, "The old gentleman was really appalled by the sight of you just now. When you go in to see him now you must all be on your best behavior and be very polite to him."

"I'm handsome and cultured," said Pig, "not rough and noisy like my brothers,"

"If it weren't for your long snout, big ears and ugly face you'd be a very good－looking man," laughed Monkey.

"Stop quarrelling," said Friar Sand. "This is hardly the place for a beauty contest. Get inside!"

With that they carried the luggage and led the horse in, entered the main room, made a respectful call of greeting, and sat down. The good and able wife took the child out and gave orders for rice to be cooked and a vegetarian meal prepared. When master and disciples had eaten it the night was drawing in, so a lamp was fetched and they sat talking in the main room. Only then did Sanzang ask his host's surname.

"Yang," the old man replied, and on being asked his age said he was seventy－three.

"How many sons do you have?" Sanzang asked.

"Only one," the old man replied. "It was my grandson that my wife

brought in just now."

"Won't you ask your son in? I would like to greet him," said Sanzang.

"He's not worth your courtesy, the wretch," the old man replied. "I was fated to raise a worthless son, and he isn't at home now."

"Where does he make his living?" Sanzang asked.

The old man nodded and sighed as he replied, "It's sad story. I would be very happy if he were willing to make an honest living, but his mind is set on evil and he won't work at farming. All he wants to do is to rob houses, hold up travelers, burn and kill. His cronies are all worse than foxes and dogs. He went away five days ago and he hasn't come back."

Sanzang did not dare to breathe a word when he heard this, but he thought, "Perhaps he was one of the ones Wukong killed." Feeling very uneasy, he bowed as he sat there. "Oh dear," he said, "oh dear. How could such good parents have so wicked a son?"

Monkey went up to the old man and said, "What do you want a rotten son like that for? He's a murderer and a rapist, and he'll get both of you into trouble too. Let me find him and kill him for you."

"I wish I could be rid of him," said the old man, "but if I did I have no other son. Evil though he is I'll need him to bury me."

"Stop meddling in things that are none of your business, brother," said Friar Sand and Pig. "We're not the government. What's it to us if his son's a bad lot? Benefactor, could you give us a bundle of straw to spread out and sleep on over there? We'll be on our way tomorrow morning." The old man rose to his feet and sent Friar Sand to take two bundles of rice straw to the yard at the back, where they were to spend the night in a thatched shed. Monkey led the horse and Pig carried the luggage as they took their master to the shed and Chapter 56

slept the night there, where we shall leave them.

Now old Mr. Yang's son was indeed one of the bandits who had fled for their lives after Monkey killed their two chiefs on the

mountainside the previous morning. Late that night, in the small hours, a group of them gathered together again and knocked at the front gate. Hearing the noise the old man pulled some clothes over his shoulders and said, "Wife, those damned bandits are here."

"Then open the gate and let them in," she replied. Only then did he open up, and what he saw was a crowd of bandits shouting, "We're starving, we're staving." Old Mr. Yang's son rushed in, and made his wife get up to cook some rice. As there was no firewood in the kitchen he went into the yard to fetch some.

Back in the kitchen he asked his wife, "Where did the white horse in the yard come from?"

"There are some monks from the East who are going to get scriptures," she replied. "They asked to stay here last night. Your parents treated them to supper and put them up in the thatched shed."

The news made the bandit clap his hands with glee as he came out of the hall saying, "What a piece of luck, brothers, what a piece of luck. Our enemies are right here in my own home."

"What enemies?" the others all asked.

:The monks who killed our chiefs came here for the night," he replied, "and they're asleep in the shed."

"Lovely," said the other bandits. "Let's get those bald–headed donkeys. We can chop them all up and pickle them in soy sauce. We'll have their things and their horse and be avenging the chiefs into the bargain."

"Take it easy," said Yang the bandit. "You lot go and sharpen your swords while we cook the rice. Let's all have a good feed before we do them in." Whereupon the bandits sharpened their swords and their spears.

The old man had heard all this, so he crept stealthily round to the back to tell the Tang Priest and his disciples,

"That evil son of mine has brought the gang here. They know you're here and they want to murder you.

Knowing how far you've come I couldn't bear to see you murdered, so please pack your bags as fast as you can. I'll let you out through the back gate."

Sanzang, now shivering with fright, kowtowed to the old man in thanks then told Pig to lead the horse while Friar Sand shouldered the carrying pole and Monkey took the nine–ringed monastic staff. The old man opened the back gate to let them out then made his way quietly back to the front to go to bed.

By the time the bandits had sharpened their weapons and eaten a good meal it was the fifth watch and almost dawn. They crowded into the backyard to find their intended victims gone. Quickly lighting lamps and fires they made a long search but could find no traces of them anywhere except that the back gate was open.

"They've got away out the back," they all exclaimed. "After them! Catch them!"

They all rushed along as fast as arrows, and when the sun rose in the East they finally saw Sanzang, who looked back when he heard shouts and saw a crowd of twenty or thirty men armed with spears and swords coming after him.

"Disciples," he called, "the bandits have caught up with us. Whatever shall we do?"

"Don't worry," said Monkey. "I'll finish them off."

"Wukong," said Sanzang, reining in his horse, "you're not to hurt them. Just scare them off."

Not a blind bit of notice did Monkey take of this as he swung his cudgel and turned to face them. "Where do you gentlemen think you're going?" he asked.

"Bloody baldies," they shouted back abusively, ringing Monkey in a circle, "give us back our chiefs." When they started thrusting and hacking at him with their spears and swords the Great Sage whirled his cudgel once around, made it as thick as a ricebowl, and scattered the lot of them. Those who took the full impact of it were killed outright; glancing blows broke bones, and even a touch left an open wound. A few of the nimbler ones managed a getaway, but the slower ones all had to pay their respects to King Yama in the Underworld.

At the sight of so many people being struck down a panic–stricken Sanzang made his horse gallop West as fast as it could, with Pig and Friar Sand rushing along beside. "Which of you is old Yang's boy?" Monkey asked the wounded bandits who were still alive.

"The one in yellow, my lord," they groaned.

Monkey went over, took his sword from him, and sliced off his head. Holding the gory head in his hand he put his cudgel away and caught up with the Tang Priest by cloud. "Master," he said, waving the head in front of the horse, "here's the head of old Yang's wicked son."

Sanzang, pale with horror, fell out of the saddle. "Evil macaque," he said, "you will be the death of me, terrifying me like that. Take it away at once." Pig kicked the head to the side of the path and buried it with his rake.

"Do get up, Master," said Friar Sand, putting down the carrying pole and supporting the Tang Priest. Pulling himself together as he sat there on the ground the venerable elder started to recite the Band–tightening Spell.

Monkey's skull was squeezed so tight that his face and ears turned bright red, his eyes bulged and his head ached. "Stop! Stop!" he pleaded, rolling around in agony, but even when Sanzang had said it a dozen times or more he still carried on.

In his unbearable agony Monkey turned somersaults and stood on his head, screaming, "Forgive me, Master.

Say what you have to say. Stop, stop!" Only then did Sanzang stop reciting the spell.

"I've nothing to say to you," he replied. "I don't want you with me any more. Go back." Kowtowing despite his pain, Monkey asked, "Master, why are you sending me away?"

"Wicked ape," said Sanzang, "you're too much of a murderer to fetch scriptures. I gave it to you yesterday for your cruelty in killing the two bandit chiefs on the mountainside. When we reached the old gentleman's house late yesterday evening he gave us a meal and a night's lodging, and we only got away with our lives because he helped us to escape through the back gate. Even though his son was a bad lot that was none of our business, and it was wrong of you to cut off his head, to say nothing of all the other lives you destroyed. Goodness knows how much you have damaged the harmony of

heaven and earth. Despite my repeated advice there is not a shred of goodness in you. I do not need yon at all. Clear off at once if you don't want me to say the spell again."

"Don't say it, don't say it," pleaded Monkey in terror, "I'm going." No sooner had the words left his mouth than he disappeared without a trace on his somersault cloud. Alas!

Chapter 56

789

Journey to the West

When the mind is full of murder,

Cinnabar cannot be treated.

If the spirit is in disorder,

The Way stays uncompleted.

If you don't know where the Great Sage had gone listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 57

The True Sun Wukong Makes His Complaint at Potaraka

The False Monkey King Copies a Document in the Water Curtain Cave Angry and depressed, the Great Sage Sun rose up into the air. There were many places he would have liked to go to but could not. In the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit he was afraid of being teased for coming back so soon after he had gone, not like a real man. He did not think he would be allowed to stay long in the palaces of Heaven; he could not face the immortals in the three magic islands in the sea; and he could not bring himself to beg for the help of the dragon king in his dragon palace. He had nobody to turn to.

"There's nothing for it," he thought bitterly. "I'll just have to go back to the master and pursue the true achievement."

He then brought his cloud straight down to stand in front of the Tang Priest's horse and say, "Please forgive me this time, Master. I'll never commit another murder, and I'll do every thing you tell me. You must, must let me escort you to the Western Heaven." The moment the Tang

Priest saw him he reined in the horse. His only reply was to start reciting the Band–tightening Spell, which he did over and over again more than twenty times, not stopping until Monkey lay weeping on the ground, the band sunk a good inch into his head.

"Why haven't you gone back? Why are you still bothering me?" Sanzang asked.

"Don't say it again," said Monkey, "don't! I've got places I can live, but I'm afraid you'll never reach the Western Heaven without me."

"You are a brutal murderer, you macaque," Sanzang angrily burst out. "You have got me into a lot of trouble on your account. I want nothing more to do with you. Whether I get there or not is nothing to do with you. Go at once. One more moment's delay and I'll say the spell again, and I won't stop till your brains have all been squeezed out." In unbearable pain, and seeing that the master would not change his mind, Monkey had no choice. Once again he shot up into the air on his somersault cloud, and this time he had a sudden inspiration.

"That monk has let me down," he thought. "I'm off to Potaraka to lodge a complaint with the Bodhisattva Guanyin."

Chapter 57

The splendid Monkey set off once more on his somersault cloud and in less than two hours he was at the Southern Ocean. He stopped his auspicious cloud and then straight to Potaraka.

Sun Wukong charged in to the Purple Bamboo Grove where Moksa the Novice appeared to greet him politely and ask, "Where are you going, Great Sage?"

"I would like to see the Bodhisattva," he replied. Moksa then led him to the mouth of the Tide Cave, where the page Sudhana bowed and asked, "Why are you here, Great, Sage?"

"I want to lay a complaint before the Bodhisattva," Monkey replied.

At the word "complaint" Sudhana said with a smile, "What an evil tongue you have, you ape. It's just like when you tricked me after I caught the Tang Priest. Our Bodhisattva is an infinitely holy and good

Bodhisattva who in her great mercy and compassion has made a vow to use the Great Vehicle to save all suffering beings. What could she have done wrong for you to complain about?"

At this Monkey, who was already in thoroughly bad spirits, exploded with fury. He gave a shout that made Sudhana fall back: "Ungrateful little beast! Stupid fool! You used to be a monster–spirit till I asked the Bodhisattva to win you over and convert you. Now you're living in eternal bliss and freedom, and you'll go on doing so as long as the heavens last. You ought to be bowing low to thank me instead of being so thoroughly insulting. I come here with a complaint to lay before the Bodhisattva, and you accuse me of having an evil tongue and complaining about her."

"I see you're as hot–tempered a monkey as ever," said Sudhana. "I was only teasing: no need to turn nasty."

As they were talking the white parrot came and flew around them, which they recognized as a summons from the Bodhisattva. Moksa and Sudhana then led Monkey in to her lotus throne, where he kowtowed to her, howling aloud as the tears streamed down his cheeks. Telling Moksa and Sudhana to help Monkey to his feet, the Bodhisattva said, "Wukong, tell me straight out what it is that is upsetting you so. Don't cry: I shall deliver you from your troubles."

"I've never been treated this badly in the whole of my life," said a tearful Monkey, continuing to kowtow to her. "Ever since you saved me from the disaster sent by Heaven I've been a faithful Buddhist and protected the Tang Priest on his way to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. I've risked my skin to rescue him from demons, even though it's been like taking crunchy bones out of a tiger's mouth, or lifting the scales on a dragon's back. I've been trying so hard to win a true reward and wipe out my past sins. I never thought that the master would be so ungrateful that he'd ruin my chances of a good destiny because he couldn't tell right from wrong."

"Explain what you mean by not telling right from wrong," said the Bodhisattva, and Monkey told her all the details of how the bandits had been killed, and of how in his anger at so much slaughter the Tang Priest had said the Band–tightening Spell many times over without going into the rights and wrongs of the case then repeatedly sent him away. He said he had come to her because he had no way of getting up to heaven or into the earth.

"The Tang Priest is travelling West on his emperor's orders," said the Bodhisattva, "and would not allow anyone to be killed for no good reason. He is a monk whose heart is set on kindness. Why did someone of your tremendous powers need to bother with killing so many small–time bandits? Bandits like that are bad, but they're human and it's wrong to kill them. It's not the same as with evil beasts, demons and spirits. Killing them is a good deed. Killing those men was cruel. You could have saved your master by just making them run away. In my impartial judgement it was wicked of you to kill them."

"Even if I was wicked," said Monkey, "I ought to be allowed to redeem it by doing good. He was wrong to sent me away like that. I beg you in your mercy, Bodhisattva, say the Band–loosening Spell and take it off. I'll give the band back to you and go and live in the Water Curtain Cave."

"The Tathagata Buddha taught me the Band–tightening Spell," the Bodhisattva replied. "He gave me three treasures when I was sent to the East to find a pilgrim to fetch the scriptures: the brocade cassock, the nine–ringed monastic staff, and the three bands. He taught me the three secret spells, but a band–loosening spell was not one of them."

"In that case, Bodhisattva, I must say good–bye," Monkey replied. "Where will you go?" the Bodhisattva asked. "I'll go to the Western Heaven to pay my respects to the Tathagata and ask him to teach me the Band–loosening Spell." Monkey replied. "Wait a moment while I find out for you whether the prospects are good."

"No need," said Monkey. "Things are quite bad enough as they are already."

"I'm not finding out about yours but about the Tang Priest's," the Bodhisattva replied.

The splendid Bodhisattva then took her seat on her lotus throne and sent her heart roaming through the three worlds while her perceptive eyes traveled all over the universe. Within the instant she spoke: "Wukong, your master is just about to be wounded, and he will soon

be coming to look for you. Wait here while I go to see the Tang Priest and tell him to continue taking you with him to fetch the scriptures and achieve the true reward." The Great Sage could only agree and control his impatience as he stood at the foot of the lotus throne.

The story returns to the Tang Priest, who since sending Monkey away had done some fifteen more miles to the West with Pig leading the horse and Friar Sand carrying the luggage. "Disciples," he said, reining in the horse, "I'm extremely hungry and thirsty. I've been going for many hours since we left that cottage before dawn and I've been thoroughly upset by that Protector of the Horses. Which of you is going to beg me some food?"

"Down you get, Master," said Pig, "while I look round here for a village to beg some food in." At this Sanzang dismounted, while the idiot went up into the air on a cloud and took a good look all around. All he could see were mountains: there was no hope of spotting a human house. Bringing the cloud back down Pig said to Sanzang, "There's nowhere to beg from here. I couldn't see a single farm when I looked around."

"In that case," said Sanzang, "fetch us some water to quench our thirst."

"I'll get some from the stream on that mountain to the South," said Pig, and Friar Sand handed him the begging bowl. While Pig carried it off on his cloud the master sat and waited beside the path for a very long time, getting more and more unbearably thirsty, and there was no sign of Pig. There is a poem to prove it that goes,

Preserve the true spirit and nourish the breath, for this is called essence.

Feeling and nature originally shared the same form.

When spirit and heart are disordered all illness arises;

If essence and form both decline the primal will crash.

Without the three contemplations all effort is wasted;

Should the four elements be too wretched there's no point in contending.

Without earth and wood there can be no more metal or water;

How can the dharma body be won through idleness?

Seeing his master in agony from thirst as Pig was not back with the water, Friar Sand put the luggage down, tethered the white horse, and said, "Master, make yourself comfortable. I'm going to hurry him up with that water." Sanzang, too tearful to speak, nodded his head in agreement, whereupon Friar Sand headed by cloud for the mountain to the South.

Sanzang was left by himself to endure his excruciating pain. In his deep misery he was alarmed by a noise that made him sit up and look. It was Monkey kneeling by the side of the path holding a porcelain cup and saying,

"Without me you can't even have water to drink, Master. Drink this cup of lovely cold water while I go to beg you some food."

"I won't drink water you give me," said Sanzang. "I'd rather die of thirst right here. I want no more of you. Go away."

"But you'll never get to the Western Heaven without me," said Monkey. "Whether I get there or not is none of your business," the Tang Priest replied. "Wicked ape! Why do you keep pestering me?" At that Monkey turned angry and started shouting abusively, "You've been lousy to me, you cruel, vicious old baldy." With that he threw the bowl aside and swung his cudgel, hitting Sanzang on his back. Sanzang fell to the ground, barely conscious and unable to speak, as Monkey took the two bundles wrapped in blue felt in his arms and disappeared without trace on a somersault cloud.

As Pig was hurrying to the mountain to the South with the bowl in his hand he noticed a thatched cottage in a hollow. He had not spotted it when first he looked because it had been hidden in a fold of the mountain.

Realizing that it was a house now he was close to the idiot thought, "If I show them my ugly mug they'll be so scared they won't possibly give me any food. It'd all be wasted effort. I'd better turn into something a bit better—looking."

The splendid idiot then made a spell with his hands, said the magic

words, shook himself seven or eight times, and turned himself into a consumptive monk with a fat, sallow face who was mumbling something as he went up to the door and called out, "Benefactor, have you any leftover rice in the kitchen for starving travelers? I'm from the East and I'm on my way to fetch scriptures from the Western Heaven. My master is back at the road, hungry and thirsty. If you have any left – over rice stuck to the bottom of your pan I beg you to give me some to save our lives."

As it happened the men of the house were all out transplanting rice and sowing millet, and the only people in were two women who had just cooked the rice for the midday meal and had filled two platters with it that they were preparing to take to the fields. There was some rice left at the bottom of the pan. Seeing how sickly he looked they took what he said about going from the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven as Chapter 57

delirious ravings. Afraid he might collapse and die in the doorway, they made a great to – do as they filled his bowl with rice from the bottom of the pan. The idiot took it from them, reverted to his true form, and went back the way he had come.

As he was going along he heard a shout of "Pig!" and looked up to see Friar Sand standing on the top of a precipice yelling, "Over here, over here." Friar Sand came down and walked straight towards him, asking,

"Why didn't you take some of the fresh water from this stream? Why did you go over there?"

"After I got here I saw a cottage in a hollow, so I went and begged this bowlful of rice."

"We could certainly use it," said Friar Sand, "but the master is terribly thirsty, so how are we going to carry some water back?"

"That's easy," said Pig. "Carry this rice in the fold of your habit while I go and fetch some water in this bowl."

The two of them were feeling very cheerful as they went back to the path, only to find Sanzang lying face downwards in the dirt. The white horse had slipped its bridle and was running to and fro beside the path, whinnying. There was not a sigh of the baggage. Pig stumbled

and beat his breast with horror, "Don't tell me,"

he shouted, "don't tell me. The survivors of the gang Monkey drove away have come back, killed the master and stolen the baggage."

"Tether the horse," said Friar Sand. "Whatever shall we do? We've failed halfway along our journey. Master!"

Tears poured down his face as he sobbed bitterly.

"Don't cry, brother," said Pig. "As this is what's happened we'll just have to forget about fetching the scriptures. You look after the master's body. I'll take the horse till I get to some town, village, market or inn where I can sell it for a few ounces of silver to buy a coffin to bury him in. Then we'll split up and go our separate ways."

Friar Sand, unable to bear the loss of his master, turned the body over to warm the face with his own. "Poor, poor master," he cried, then noticed hot breath coming from his master's nose and felt warmth in his chest.

"Come here, Pig," he shouted, "the master's still alive." Pig came over and helped Sanzang to sit up.

As Sanzang came to he groaned and said bitterly, "That evil macaque tried to murder me."

"What macaque?" the other two asked. The venerable elder sighed and said nothing.

Only when he had asked for and drunk a few mouthfuls of water did he reply, "As soon as you'd gone Wukong came to pester me again. When I still refused to take him back he hit me with his cudgel and stole the bundles wrapped in blue felt." At this Pig ground his teeth as the fury rose higher and higher in him.

"Damn that monkey," he said. "How could he do such a terrible thing? Look after the master," he continued, addressing Friar Sand, "I'm going to his house to get back the bundles."

"Don't lose your temper," said Friar Sand. "Let's help the master over to that cottage in the hollow to ask for hot tea. Then we can heat up the rice you've begged already, and get the master better before we go after Monkey."

Accepting this suggestion Pig helped the master back on the horse.

Carrying the bowl of water, and with the rice in Friar Sand's habit, they headed straight back for the door of the cottage. There was only an old woman at home, and at the sight of them she hid herself as fast as she could. Friar Sand put his hands together in front Chapter 57

of his chest and said, "Good lady, we've been sent by the Tang court in the East to the Western Heaven. As our master is not very well I have come to ask you for some hot tea to warm his rice with."

"We had a consumptive monk begging here just now who said he'd come from the East," the old woman replied. "Now you say you're from the East too. There's nobody at home. Please try somewhere else."

Hearing this, the venerable elder dismounted with Pig's help, bowed to her and said, "Madam, I used to have three disciples who worked together to protect me on my way to the Thunder Monastery in the country of India to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. But because my senior disciple Sun Wukong is a born murderer and will not be kind I sent him away. To my utter surprise he sneaked up on me, hit me across the back, and stole my clothes, baggage and bowl. I want to send one of my other disciples after him, and as I can't stay by the roadside I have come here to ask if I may rest in your house for a while. It will only be till the luggage has been recovered. I won't stay long."

"A consumptive monk with a fat, sallow face begged some food from us just now," the woman said. "He said he had come from the East and was going to the Western Heaven. There can't be another group of you."

"That was me," said Pig, unable to keep a straight face any longer. "I made myself look like that. I thought my long snout and big ears would give you such a fright that you wouldn't give me any food. If you don't believe me, my brother here has the rice from the bottom of your pan inside his tunic."

Recognizing the rice the old woman stopped trying to send them away. She asked them to sit down inside and prepared a pot of hot tea that she gave to Friar Sand to warm the rice with. He did this and handed it to his master, who ate a few mouthfuls, sat quietly to calm himself for a while, then asked, "Which of you will go to fetch the

luggage?"

"When you sent him away the other year," replied Pig, "I went to fetch him. I know the way to his Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. Wait here while I go."

"No," said Sanzang, "not you. You have never got on with that macaque, and besides you're very rough – spoken. If you say anything wrong he'll hit you. Let Wujing go." Friar Sand agreed at once, and Sanzang gave him these instructions: "When you get there you must keep a close watch on the situation. If he is willing to give you back the bundles then pretend to be very grateful when you accept them. If he won't you must on no account quarrel with him. Go straight to the Bodhisattva in the Southern Sea, tell her what has happened, and ask her to demand them from him."

Friar Sand accepted his instructions and said to Pig, "I'm off to find Monkey now. Whatever you do, don't complain. Look after the master properly. You mustn't have a row with these people or they might not feed you. I'll soon be back."

"I understand," Pig replied with a nod. "Off you go, and come back soon whether you recover the luggage or not. Otherwise we'll have lost both ways," Friar Sand then made a hand spell and headed off by cloud for the Eastern Continent of Superior Body. Indeed:

When the body is present but the soul files off, nothing remains to keep it alive; A furnace without fire can refine no cinnabar.

The yellow wife leaves the lord to seek the metal elder.

Chapter 57

Wood's mother puts on a sickly face to look after the master.

Who knows when this journey will ever end

Or when he will return from far away?

The Five Elements give birth and yield to each other.

All is disorder until the mind – ape comes back.

Friar Sand flew for three days and nights before he reached the Eastern Ocean. At the sound of its waves he looked down and saw

Black mists up to the sky and gloomy vapors;

The ocean embracing the sun in dawn's cold light.

But he was in no mood to enjoy the view as he crossed Yingzhou and the other islands of immortals and headed on East straight for the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. Riding the sea wind and walking on the water it took him a lot longer before he saw a line of peaks like serried halberds and sheer rocks like screens. When he reached the highest peak he landed his cloud and found his way down the mountain, heading for the Water Curtain Cave. As he approached he heard a great commotion: the mountain was covered with yelling monkey spirits. When closer still he saw Monkey sitting on a high stone terrace holding a piece of paper in both hands from which he was reading:

We, the Emperor Li of the Great Tang Dynasty in the East have called to our presence our younger brother the Master of the Law Chen Xuanzang and commissioned him to go West to seek the scriptures from the Lord Buddha in the Thunder Monastery at the Saha Vulture Peak in India. When our soul went wandering in the Underworld after we succumbed to a sudden illness we were fortunate enough to have our years of life extended and to be returned to the world of the living by the Lord of Darkness. Since then we have held many masses and built altars to help the souls of the dead across to the other side. We were blessed by the appearance of the golden deliverer from suffering, the Bodhisattva Guanyin, who informed us that the Buddha in the West has scriptures that will deliver all lost souls. We have therefore sent the Dharma Master Xuanzang to make the long journey across a thousand mountains in search of the sutras and the gathas. We request that in the states of the West through which he passed he be allowed to proceed in accordance with this passport and that his holy cause be not brought to naught. Given on an auspicious day in the autumn of the thirteenth year of *Zhenguan* of the Great Tang.

Since leaving that mighty empire he has passed through many other states. On the journey he has taken three disciples. The senior one is Sun Wukong the Novice; the second is Zhu Wuneng, or Zhu Bajie; and the third is Sha Wujing, or Friar Sand.

Chapter 57

Having read the text of Sanzang's passport through once he read it out again, at which Friar Sand could not help himself calling out at the top of his voice, "Brother, why are you reading the master's passport out?"

When Monkey heard this he jerked his head up and, refusing to recognize Friar Sand, shouted, "Arrest him!

Arrest him!" All the monkeys rushed him and surrounded him, pulling him and dragging him towards Monkey, who shouted, "Who do you think you are? What a nerve, coming so close to our immortals' cave."

Seeing how Monkey had turned cold and was refusing to recognize him any longer Friar Sand had no choice but to go up to him with a bow and say, "Elder brother, it was wrong of our master to be so angry with you, curse you and send you away. Pig and I ought to have persuaded him not to, and we shouldn't have been away looking for water and begging for food for our starving, thirsty master when you were so good as to come back. It was wrong of the master to be so stubborn and to refuse again to let you stay. That was why you knocked him senseless and took the luggage. When we came back we revived the master and now I've come to see you. Unless you hate the master and have forgotten what you owe him for delivering you from your torment in the past, won't you bring the luggage and come back with me to see him? Then we can all go to the Western Heaven and win our true reward. If you really hate him so deeply that you won't come with me, then please, please give me the bundles. Then you can enjoy the sunset of your life here in your native mountain.

This way we'll all be fine."

Monkey's answer to this was to say with a derisive laugh, "that's not what I had in mind at all, brother. The reason why I hit the master and took the luggage isn't because I'm not going to the West or want to stay here.

I'm learning the passport off by heart so that I can go to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures myself. I shall have all the glory of taking them back to the East. I'll make those people in the Southern Jambu Continent see me as a great master and I'll be famous for ever."

"What you say isn't quite right," replied Friar Sand with a smile. "Nobody's ever heard of Sun the Novice going to fetch the scriptures. Our Tathagata Buddha created three stores of true scriptures and sent the Bodhisattva Guanyin to the East to find the pilgrim who would go to fetch them. Our job is to escort the pilgrim across a thousand mountains and through all the countries along the way. As the Bodhisattva has told us, the pilgrim was once the venerable elder Golden Cicada, a disciple of Tathagata Buddha's. Because he was exiled from Vulture Peak and reborn in the East for not listening to the Lord Buddha's sermons on the scriptures he is the one who must make his true achievement in the West and return to the Great Way. We three were saved to protect him from the demons he would meet on the journey. No Lord Buddha's going to give you the scriptures if you turn up without the Tang Priest. It'd just be wasted effort."

"Brother," said Monkey, "you've always been rather thick. You don't know the half of it. You may say you've got a Tang Priest, but what makes you think I haven't got one to escort to? I've chosen another holy monk here to escort. No problem! We're starting off on our big journey tomorrow. If you don't believe me I'll show you him. Little ones," he called, "bring my master out at once." In they ran, and they came out again leading a white horse, a Tang Sanzang, a Pig carrying the luggage and a Friar Sand with his monastic staff.

"I've never changed my name," roared Friar Sand in fury at this sight. "There can't possibly be another Friar Sand. How dare you! Take this!" The splendid Friar Sand raised his demon–quelling staff with both arms and brought it down on his double's head, killing him outright and revealing that he had really been a monkey spirit. This made Monkey so angry that he swung his gold–banded cudgel and led all the monkeys to surround him. Lashing about him, Friar Sand fought his way out and escaped by cloud.

"That damned ape is being so thoroughly vicious that I'll have to report him to the Bodhisattva," he thought; and as Friar Sand had killed a monkey spirit and been driven away Monkey did not go after him. Going back to his cave he told his underlings to drag the corpse to one side, skin it and cook its flesh, on which he and the other monkeys then feasted with coconut toddy and the wine of grapes. Then he chose another monkey fiend Chapter 57

who was good at transformations to turn into Friar Sand and started instructing him again as he prepared to travel to the West. There we shall leave him.

Meanwhile Friar Sand flew his cloud away from the Eastern Ocean and traveled for a day and a night to the Southern Ocean. Before long Mount Potaraka came into view not far away, so he pressed forward then brought his cloud down so that he could stop and look. It was a wonderful sight. Indeed: It includes all the mysteries of heaven and earth.

Here is the confluence of the rivers,

Where sun and stars are washed and bathed.

Hither all creatures come,

The winds are born and the moon is rocked in the ripples.

When the tidal wave rises high the leviathan is transformed.

Amid the mighty breakers the giant turtle swims.

The waters are joined to the Western and Northern Seas;

The waves connect with the Central and Eastern Oceans.

The four seas are linked as the artery of the earth;

In the magic islands are palaces of immortals.

Forget about all the earthly paradises;

Look at Potaraka's cloudy cave.

A wonderful sight:

Noble the primal spirit of the peak at sunset;

Below the cliffs the winds make rippling crystal.

Peacocks fly in the Purple Bamboo Grove;

Parrots talk in the branches of green poplar.

Flowers of jade and jasper always bloom;

Precious trees and golden lotuses grow every year.

White cranes come to pay homage at this peak;

Phoenixes often alight in the mountain pavilions.

Even the fish here cultivate their true nature,

Leaping in the waves as they listen to the scriptures.

As Friar Sand strolled on the mountain enjoying this magical view Moksa the Novice came up to him and said, "Why are you here instead of escorting the Tang Priest on his way to fetch the scriptures, Sha Wujing?"

Friar Sand bowed to him and replied, "There is something on which I would like an audience with the Bodhisattva. Could I trouble you to take me to her?"

Moksa, who realized that he was looking for Monkey, asked no further questions but went straight to the Bodhisattva and said, "The Tang Priest's junior disciple Sha Wujing is here to pay homage."

When Monkey, who was still there below the lotus throne, heard this he said with a smile, "The Tang Priest must be in trouble if Friar Sand is here to ask for your help, Bodhisattva." The Bodhisattva then asked Moksa to bring him in. Friar Sand prostrated himself on the ground to kowtow to her, then looked up, about to start making his complaint, when he saw Monkey standing beside her. Without a word he struck at Monkey's face with his demon–subduing staff. Instead of hitting back Monkey dodged the blow and got out of the way.

"I'll get you, you thoroughly evil, treacherous ape," roared Friar Sand. "You're trying to deceive the Bodhisattva too."

"Don't hit him," shouted the Bodhisattva. "Tell me what's been happening."

Only then did Friar Sand put down his precious staff and kowtow to the lotus throne again, saying with raging fury, "We're lost count of the number of murders this ape has committed on the journey. The other day he killed two highwaymen and the master let him have it,

so when we were spending the next night at the bandit chief's home it came as a shock when he butchered as many of the gang as he could and took a severed head all dripping with blood to show to the master. It gave the master such a fright that he fell off his horse, said some nasty things to Monkey and sent him packing. After he'd gone the master was so hungry and thirsty that he sent Pig off to look for some water, and because Pig took a very long time to get back he sent me off after him. We never imagined that Monkey would come back, hit the master with his iron cudgel and steal the two bundles wrapped in blue felt while we were away. We came back and brought the master round. Then I went all the way to the Water Curtain Cave to fetch Monkey. To my amazement he turned cold and refused to recognize me. He was reading the master's passport aloud over and over again. When I asked him why, he said that as he couldn't escort the Tang Priest any further he was going to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven and take them back East himself. Then they'd treat him as a great master and he'd be famous for ever. When I asked who'd give him scriptures if the Tang Priest wasn't with him he said he'd chosen a holy monk and asked him to come out. There was a white horse, a Tang Priest, a Pig and a Friar Sand. Tm Friar Sand,' I said, 'and the one and only Friar Sand too'. I hit him one with my staff, and he turned out to be a monkey spirit. When Monkey came after me with his hordes I decided to come here to tell you, Bodhisattva, and ask for your help. I never realized he'd get here before me by somersault cloud, or that he'd fool you with his fine words."

Chapter 57

"You must not make such slanders, Wujing," the Bodhisattva said. "Wukong has been here for four days. I never let him go back, and he didn't send for another Tang Priest to go to fetch the scriptures."

"But what about that Monkey in the Water Curtain Cave? I'm telling you the truth," replied Friar Sand.

"Calm down," said the Bodhisattva. "I'll send Wukong back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit with you to take a good look round. If he's real he'll be hard to wipe out, but if he's a fake you'll be able to eliminate him easily. You'll find out which he is when you get there." At this Brother Monkey and Friar Sand took their leave of the Bodhisattva. They were making their journey

To the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit

The rights and wrongs to reveal;

To the cave with a curtain of water

To tell the false from the real.

If you don't know how they told them apart you had better listen to the explanation in the next installment **Chapter 58**

Two Minds Throw Heaven and Earth into Uproar

One Body Cannot Achieve True Nirvana

When Monkey and Friar Sand took their leave of the Bodhisattva they departed from the Southern Ocean by two beams of auspicious light. Now Monkey's somersault cloud was much faster than Friar Sand's immortal's cloud, so Monkey was drawing ahead when Friar Sand pulled him back and said, "There's no need for you to show me your heels like that, brother, rushing ahead to sort things out at home. Wait for me to come with you."

Although Brother Monkey's intentions were good Friar Sand could not help being suspicious. The two of them then flew their clouds together and were soon in sight of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. They brought their clouds down and had a good look at the outside of the cave, where there was indeed a Monkey sitting on a high stone terrace, drinking and making merry with his monkey hosts. He looked exactly the same as the Great Sage: yellow hair held in a golden band, fiery eyes with golden pupils, a brocade tunic, a tigerskin kilt, a gold −banded iron cudgel in his hands, and deerskin boots. He had the same Hairy face like a thunder god,

Cheeks like the planet Saturn;

Pointed ears and a forehead broad,

And long, protruding fangs.

In an explosion of fury the Great Sage left Friar Sand behind as he

went up to the other, brandishing his cudgel and shouting abusively, "What sort of demon do you think you are? How dare you! You make yourself look like me, you steal my children and grandchildren, you occupy my immortal's cave, and on top of that you live it up like this." When the other Monkey heard all this he did not deign to reply but went for him with his own iron cudgel. When the two Monkeys were together there was no way of telling the true from the false. It was a splendid fight:

Two cudgels and a pair of monkey spirits,

A couple of truly formidable foes.

Both want to escort the Tang emperor's brother;

Each longs to achieve what will make him famous.

The true Monkey now accepts Sakyamuni's teachings;

The false demon only pretends to be a Buddhist.

In magic powers and transformations

The false and true are evenly balanced.

One is the Sage Equaling Heaven of primal energy,

The other an earth spirit who has long refined his powers.

One wields an As – You – Will gold – banded cudgel,

The other an iron bar that follows the heart's desire.

As they block and parry neither comes out on top.

First they fight each other outside the cave,

But soon they carry on the struggle in mid air.

Each of them rose on his clouds and light till they were fighting up in the clouds of the ninth heaven. As Friar Sand stood beside them he dared not intervene in their fight as he really could not tell the true Monkey from the false one. He longed to draw his sword and join in, but he was frightened of wounding the real Monkey.

When he had endured this dilemma for a long time he shot back down to the mountain scar, where he used his demon – quelling staff to fight

his way to the outside of the Water Curtain Cave. Here he sent all the demons fleeing in terror, turned the stone benches over, and smashed the tableware from which they had been eating Chapter 58

and drinking to their hearts' content. But although he looked everywhere for the blue felt bundles he failed to find them. Now the Water Curtain Cave was so called because the waterfall screening its entrance looked from a distance like a white cloth curtain and only appeared as the waterfall it was from close to. As Friar Sand did not know that the entrance to the cave was behind it he was unable to find the way in, so he took his cloud back up to the Ninth Heaven and started swinging his staff again, still unable to strike.

"Friar Sand," said the Great Sage, "you can't help much here. Go back and tell the master what's been happening to us while I drive this demon to Potaraka Island in the Southern Ocean for the Bodhisattva to identify me as the real Monkey." The other Monkey then repeated what he had said. As they looked and sounded exactly the same Friar Sand really could not tell them apart. He could only do as he was told and ride his cloud back to rejoin the Tang Priest.

The two Monkeys meanwhile fought and shouted their way to the Southern Ocean, where they went straight to Potaraka Island still throwing blows and abuse at each other. Their unending shouts disturbed all the devas who protected the Law, so that they went to the Tide Cave and reported, "Bodhisattva, two Sun Wukongs really have fought their way here."

The Bodhisattva came down from her lotus throne and went with Moksa, the page Sudhana and the Naga Maiden to the entrance, where she shouted, "Stay where you are, evil beast."

Each Monkey grabbed hold of the other one while the real one said, "Bodhisattva, this damned fiend really does look just like me. Our fight started at the Water Curtain Cave and has been going on for a very long time without getting anywhere. Friar Sand's mortal eyes are too weak to tell us apart, so he can't help at all. I sent him back West to report to the master while I fought this bloody impostor here for you to distinguish the true from the false. Your eyes are perceptive, Bodhisattva."

The other Monkey then said exactly the same. Look long and hard

though they did, the devas and the Bodhisattva could not tell which was which. "Let go of each other and stand one on each side while I take another look," the Bodhisattva said.

Doing as she told them, the one on her left said, "I'm the real Monkey," and the one on her right said, "He's an impostor."

The Bodhisattva then called Moksa and Sudhana to her and whispered these instructions: "I want one of you to stand very close to each of them while I recite the Band—tightening Spell quietly. The one in agony will be the real one, and the one who isn't will be the impostor."

One of them went up to each of the Monkeys, but as the Bodhisattva secretly said the words of the spell they both yelled out in pain, clutched their heads, and rolled on the ground shouting, "Stop! Stop!" The moment she did they grabbed each other again and went on fighting and shouting. At her wit's end, the Bodhisattva ordered the devas and Moksa to help, but none of them dared strike a blow for fear of wounding the real Monkey.

"Sun Wukong," called the Bodhisattva, and both the Monkeys answered her. "As you were once appointed the Protector of the Horses," said the Bodhisattva, "When you made havoc in the Heavenly Palace, all the heavenly generals recognize you. Go to the upper world: let it distinguish between you two. Come back and tell me the result." The Great Sage thanked the Bodhisattva for her kindness and the other Monkey also thanked her.

Chapter 58

Pulling and tugging at each other and keeping up their ceaseless clamour they went straight to the Southern Gate of Heaven, where the Heavenly King Virupaksa led the four heavenly generals Ma, Zhao, Wen and Guan and all the other gate gods great and small to block the entrance with their weapons.

"Where are you going?" he shouted. "This is no place for a brawl."

"Sanzang sent me away for killing some bandits while I was escorting him to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures," the Great Sage replied. "I went to Potaraka to complain. To my horror this evil spirit

turned himself into my double, knocked the Tang Priest over and stole the luggage. Friar Sand went to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit looking for me and found that this evil spirit had seized my cave. Then he went to Potaraka to tell the Bodhisattva and ask for her help. When he saw me there he made the outrageous accusation that I'd got there first by somersault cloud and told the Bodhisattva a pack of lies to cover up.

Luckily she could vouch for me and didn't believe Friar Sand, so she sent us both back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit to find out what had happened. As you can see, this evil spirit looks just like me. We fought our way from the Water Curtain Cave to Potaraka Island to see the Bodhisattva, but she couldn't tell us apart, so I've now fought him all the way here in the hope that all the eyes of all the heavens will be able to see that I'm the real Monkey." Then the other Monkey told the same story. No matter how long they looked all the gods of the heavens could not tell them apart.

"If you can't tell which is which," the two Monkey shouted, "get out of the way and let us go to see the Jade Emperor."

As the gods could not stop them they opened the gates wide to let them go straight to the Hall of Miraculous Mist. Marshal Ma and the four Heavenly Teachers Zhang, Ge, Xu and Qiu all reported to the Jade Emperor,

"Two identical Sun Wukongs from the mortal world have charged in through the gates of Heaven and say that they want to see Your Majesty." Before they had finished the two Monkeys came roaring straight in, so alarming the Jade Emperor that he came down from his throne and stood in the palace hall. "Why are you two making such a row in the heavenly palace and shouting in our presence?" the Jade Emperor asked. "Do you want to die?"

"Long live Your Majesty," said the Great Sage. "Now that I'm a devout Buddhist I'd never dare try to bully my betters. It's just that this evil spirit has turned himself into my double." He then told the whole story, concluding, "and I beg that Your Majesty will unmask the impostor." Then the other Monkey said the same thing all over again.

The Jade Emperor ordered Heavenly King Li the Pagoda – carrier to look at them both in his demon – revealing mirror, kill the false one and preserve the true one. The Heavenly King caught them both in his mirror and invited the Jade Emperor and the other deities all to look. Both Monkeys could be seen in it, wearing the same golden band and

the same clothes. There was not the slightest difference between them. Unable to tell them apart, the Jade Emperor had both of them driven out of the palace.

The Great Sage gave a mocking laugh and so did the other Monkey. Then they grabbed each other by the hair and by the throat, fought their way out of the heavenly gates, and landed on the road to the West. "Let's go and see the master," said one of them; and the other replied, "Let's go and see the master."

After Friar Sand had taken his leave of the two Monkeys it took him three days and nights' travelling to return to the farm, where he told the Tang Priest everything that had happened. The Tang Priest was full of regrets:

"I said that Sun Wukong had hit me and stolen the bundles, never realizing that an evil spirit had turned itself into an imitation Monkey."

"The evil spirit made doubles of yourself, the white horse, Pig carrying our luggage, and me," said Friar Sand.

"I was so furious that I killed the fake Friar Sand: he was really a monkey spirit. That made them all run away, then I went to tell the Bodhisattva my troubles. She sent Monkey and me back to identify the demon, but he was so much like the real Monkey that I couldn't help in the fight, which is why I've come back to report to you, Master."

Sanzang paled with horror at this news, while Pig roared with laughter. "Great, great," he guffawed. "Just as this kind old lady said, there are several lots of pilgrims going to fetch the scriptures. They're one lot, aren't they?"

Everyone in the house, young and old alike, came to ask Friar Sand, "Where have you been looking for money for your travelling expenses these last few days?"

"I went to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body to look for my eldest brother and fetch the baggage," Friar Sand replied with a smile. "Then I went to Potaraka Island in the

Southern Ocean to see the Bodhisattva Guanyin and to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit again before coming back here."

"How long was your return journey?" the old man of the family asked.

"About 70,000 miles," Friar Sand replied.

"That would be a very long way to walk in only a few days," the old man said, "You must have gone by cloud to get there."

"How else do you think he got across the sea?" said Pig.

"What you and I do is like walking compared with Monkey: he'd have been there and back in a day or two,"

said Friar Sand. When the family heard this they realized that they must all be gods or immortals.

"No, we're not," said Pig, "We're senior to them."

As they were talking they were interrupted by a noisy quarrel in mid air, and when they rushed out to look they saw two Monkeys fighting. The sight made Pig's hands itch. "I'm going up to tell them apart," he said, and with that the splendid idiot leapt up into the air and shouted, "Stop yelling, brother, Pig's here."

"Hit the evil spirit," both Monkeys shouted, "hit the evil spirit."

All this both horrified and delighted the family, who exclaimed, "We've got a whole lot of arhats who can ride on clouds staying with us. Even if we'd made a vow to feed monks we would never have been able to feed such holy men as these." They were now more generous with their food and tea than ever. Then they began to worry that if the fight between the two Sun the Novices turned nasty, heaven and earth might be turned upside down: it could be disastrous.

Seeing that behind the old man's delight lay these deep misgivings Sanzang said to him, "There's no need to worry or alarm yourself, benefactor. When I made him submit and become my disciple he gave up evil and turned to good. Of course we will show you our gratitude."

"That would be too great an honour," the old man replied, "too great an honour."

Chapter 58

"Stop talking now, benefactor," said Friar Sand, "and you sit here, Master. Pig and I'll each bring one of them back here to stand in front of you. When you say the spell the one who suffers will be the real Monkey and the one who doesn't will be the impostor."

"What a very good idea," said Sanzang.

Friar Sand then rose up into mid–air and said, "Stop it, both of you. I'm taking you for the master to choose between you." The Great Sage then let go of his opponent, and so did the other Monkey. Friar Sand held one and told Pig to hold the other, and they took them both down by their clouds till they stood in front of the thatched cottage.

As soon as he saw them Sanzang began to say the Band–tightening Spell, at which both Monkeys cried out together, "Why do you have to say that spell when we're fighting so hard? Stop! Stop!" Being a kind and merciful man the venerable elder stopped reciting the spell before he had been able to tell them apart. The two Monkeys then broke free from Pig and Friar Sand and started fighting again.

"Brothers," the Great Sage said, "look after the master while I fight this impostor down to get the Kings of the Underworld to tell which of us is which." The other Monkey said likewise, and the two of them soon disappeared, grabbing and tugging at each other.

"Friar Sand," said Pig, "why didn't you grab the luggage off the fake Pig when you saw him carrying it at the Water Curtain Cave?"

"The evil spirits surrounded me when I killed my double with the demon–quelling staff," Friar Sand replied.

"They were going to get me, so I had to flee for my life. After I'd been to see the Bodhisattva and gone back to the cave entrance again with Monkey I overturned all their stone benches and scattered the little demons, but I couldn't see any entrance to the cave, only a waterfall. I came back empty–handed as I couldn't find the luggage."

"Let me tell you something," said Pig. "When I went there a few years ago to ask him to come back we met outside the cave. After I'd persuaded him to come he jumped down and went into the cave to change. I saw him go straight through the water: the waterfall is the entrance. I bet that's where that devil has put our luggage."

"As you know the way into the cave I think you'd better go and fetch

our baggage from there while the demon's away," said Sanzang. "Even if Wukong does come back I still won't have him."

"I'm off then," said Pig.

"There are thousands and thousands of little monkeys in front of the cave," said Friar Sand. "It'd be terrible if they were too much for you by yourself."

"I'm not worried," said Pig, who rushed outside and headed off to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit to fetch the luggage.

The two Monkeys fought their way round to the back of the Dark Mountain of the Underworld, where all the demons shivered and shook with terror as they hid themselves. The ones who managed to run away first rushed straight to the Underworld government offices and reported to the Senluo Palace, "Your Majesties, two Great Sages Equaling Heaven have come to the Dark Mountain and are fighting their way here."

The Ring of Qinguang in the First Palace reported this with alarm to the King of Chujiang in the Second Palace. The news was passed on in turn to King Songdi in the Third Palace, the King of Biancheng in the Fourth Palace, King Yama in the Fifth Palace, King Impartial in the Sixth Palace, the King of Taishan in the Seventh Palace, the Metropolitan King in the Eighth Palace, King Wuguan in the Ninth Palace, and King Everturning Wheel in the Tenth Palace. In an instant the Ten Kings all gathered together and sent an urgent message to King Ksitigarbha. Meanwhile the Underworld forces were mustered in the Senluo Palace ready to capture the true and the false Monkey. Just then there was the roar of a mighty wind as dreary mists filled the air and the two Monkeys came tumbling and rolling to the Senluo Palace.

The Lords of the Underworld stepped forward to block their way and say, "Great Sages, why are you making such disorder in our Underworld?"

To this the real Great Sage replied, "I was escorting the Tang Priest on his journey to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven when bandits tried to rob him on a mountain in the land of Western Liang.

He got angry with me when I killed a few of them and sent me away. I went to tell my troubles to the Bodhisattva in the Southern Ocean. I never imagined that this demon would have the effrontery to turn himself into my double, attack my master on the road, and steal our baggage. When my fellow–disciple Friar Sand went back to my mountain to fetch the baggage he found that the demon had created an imitation of the master to take to the Western Heaven and fetch the scriptures, so he rushed to the Southern Ocean to see the Bodhisattva Guanyin and found me there at her side. After he'd told his story the Bodhisattva sent me back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit with him to see what was going on. I found that this bastard had stolen my cave. We argued all the way to the Bodhisattva Guanyin's place, but she couldn't tell which of us was the real me. Then I fought with him up to Heaven, where none of the gods knew which of us was which, and after that went to see the master. When the master recited the Band–tightening Spell my double was in just as much pain as I was.

That's why I've brought this chaos to the Underworld in the hope that Your Majesties will look up the Registers of Life and Death for me to find out about the False Sun the Novice's background so that I can catch his soul and end this confusion of there being two minds." The demon then said the same thing.

The Lords of the Underworld called on the judges in charge of the records to go through them carefully from beginning to end. There was nobody under the name of False Sun the Novice. They checked through the registers of hairy beasts again, and found that under item 130 in the monkey section there was a record of how the Great Sage Sun had achieved the Way in his youth, made havoc in the Underworld and removed his name from the registers of death, so that from then on none of the monkeys were listed. When the judges had made their inspection they reported back to the palace.

Holding their tablets of office, the Lords of the Underworld said to Monkey, "Great Sage, there are no names in the records that can be checked. You will have to go back to the world of the living to be told apart."

As they were saying this they heard the Bodhisattva King Ksitigarbha shout, "Wait, wait! I'll send Examiner to tell you apart." Now Examiner was the name of an animal who lay under the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's sutra table. Just by lying there he could tell good from evil and wise from stupid among any of the snails, fish, hairy creatures, feathered creatures, insects, heavenly immortals, earthly immortals, divine immortals, human immortals and devil immortals in

all the mountains, rivers and countries of the four great continents, in all cave heavens and in all blessed places. The animal lay on the ground in the courtyard of the Senluo Palace as Ksitigarbha instructed it.

A little later it raised its head and said to Ksitigarbha, "I've found the name of the demon, but I cannot say it to his face, nor can I help catch him."

"What would happen if you identified him to his face?" Ksitigarbha asked.

"If I did," Examiner replied, "I am afraid that the evil spirit would turn nasty, make disorder in the palace and destroy the peace of the Underworld."

"Why won't you help capture him?" Ksitigarbha went on to ask, and Examiner replied, "The evil spirit's magic powers are no less than those of Sun Wukong. No matter how much dharma power the gods of the Underworld have, they would never be able to catch him."

"In that case, how is the evil spirit to be got rid of?"

"Boundless is the Buddha's Dharma," Examiner replied. Ksitigarbha was now enlightened. "As you two look the same and have the same magic powers," he said to both Monkeys, "if you want to be told apart you will have to go to Sakyamuni Buddha in Thunder Monastery."

"You're right," they both replied together, "you've right. You and I'll go to the Western Heaven to be told apart by the Lord Buddha." They then took their leave of Ksitigarbha and were seen out by the Ten Kings of the Underworld as they went up to the Turquoise Cloud Palace, after which devils were sent to close the entrance to the Underworld.

Watch the two Monkeys as they fly by cloud and mist to the Western Heaven. There is a poem about it that goes,

Troubles arise if one has two minds;

Doubts cloud everything from sea to sky.

One desires fine horses and the highest rank,

Craving for eminence at the royal court.

Fighting North and South without respite,

They parry to East and West with never a pause.

In dhyana the secret of mindlessness must be learned;

Nourish the babe in silence and form the holy foetus.

The two of them fought as they flew through the air, grabbing, tugging, pulling and snatching at each other, all the way to the outside of the Thunder Monastery on Vulture Peak in the Western Heaven. Even before they arrived the four Bodhisattvas, the eight vajrapanis, the five hundred arhats, the three thousand protectors, the nuns, monks, lay people and all the holy hosts were standing beneath the seven – precious lotus throne listening to the Tathagata expounding the Dharma. This is what he was explaining: Chapter 58

There is existence in non – existence, non – existence in non – non – existence. There is matter in non – matter, emptiness in non – emptiness. What exists is non – existent, and what does not exist is not non – existent.

Non – matter is matter; non – emptiness is emptiness. Emptiness is emptiness and matter is matter. Matter is not permanent matter, matter is empty. Emptiness is not permanent emptiness, emptiness is matter. Know that emptiness is not empty and that matter is not matter. This is what is meant by insight and understanding the Wonderful Voice.

All the host kowtowed in submission. Amid the sound of chanting the Tathagata released a shower of heavenly petals, left his throne and said to them. "You are all of one mind. Watch the struggle of two minds coming here."

They all raised their eyes to look and saw the two Monkeys come shouting and yelling to the holy Thunder Peak. The eight vajrapanis

were so alarmed that they stepped forward to block their way and say, "Where do you two think you are going?"

"This evil spirit has turned himself into my double," Monkey replied, "so I wish to go to the lotus throne to ask the Tathagata to tell that I am the real Sun Wukong and he is an impostor."

As the vajrapanis could not stop them they yelled at each other right to the foot of the lotus throne, where they kowtowed and each of them said, "Your disciple has been escorting the Tang Priest here to fetch the true scriptures. Goodness only knows how much effort I've spent dealing with demons and capturing monsters along the way. Recently we were robbed by bandits, and I admit that I did twice kill some of them. The master was so angry with me that he sent me back and wouldn't let me come with him to worship your golden self.

The only thing I could do was to go back to the Southern Ocean to tell my troubles to Guanyin. I never imagined that this evil spirit would make himself look and sound just like me, knock the master over, and steal our luggage. My brother Friar Sand went to my mountain looking for me and this monster talked a whole lot of fancy nonsense about having his own holy monk to go and fetch the scriptures. When Friar Sand got away and fled to the Southern Ocean to tell the whole story to Guanyin she sent us both back to my mountain.

After that the two of us, the real me and the impostor side by side, fought our way to the Southern Ocean, Heaven, the Tang Priest and the Underworld, but nobody could tell which of us was which. That is why I've had the effrontery to come here to beg you in your infinite charity and mercy to identify me as the true Sun Wukong. Then I'll be able to escort the Tang Priest here to worship you in person and fetch the scriptures to take back to the East, so that the great teachings will be made known for ever." Hearing the two of them saying the same things in the same voice, none of the host could tell them apart: only the Tathagata himself knew. He was just about to expose the impostor when a coloured cloud brought Guanyin from the South to see our Buddha.

"Noble Guanyin," said our Buddha, putting his hands together in front of his chest, "can you tell the true Sun the Novice from the false one?"

"I could not tell them apart when they visited my island," the Bodhisattva replied. "Since then they have been to Heaven and the Underworld, and still nobody could say which was which. That is why I have come to beg you, Tathagata, to identify the true Sun Wukong."

To this the Buddha replied with a smile, "You all have very great dharma powers, but you can only scan everything that happens under the sky. You cannot know all the creatures and categories under the sky."

When the Bodhisattva asked what these categories were, the Buddha replied, "There are five kinds of immortal: heavenly, earthly, divine, human and demonic. There are five kinds of beast: snail, scaly, furry, feathered and insect. This wretch is not heavenly, earthly, divine, human or demonic. He is not a snail, or Chapter 58

scaly, or furry, or feathered or an insect. Now there are also four kinds of ape that cause confusion and don't come under any of the ten categories."

"May I ask what these four kinds of ape are?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"The first kind is the intelligent stone monkey," the Buddha replied. "He can do all kinds of transformation, knows all about the seasons of Heaven and earthly advantages, and can move the stars and their constellations about. The second kind is the red－rumped mandril that knows all about the Yin and the Yang and human affairs, can go into or out of anywhere, and knows how to prolong its life and avoid death. The third kind is the magic－armed gibbon that can catch the sun or moon, shrink mountains, see what is auspicious and what is not, and fool around with heaven and earth. The fourth kind is the six－eared macaque which has wonderful hearing and perception. It knows about the past and the future and understands all creatures. These four kinds of ape do not come within any of the ten categories and are not listed among the creatures that live between heaven and earth. I can see that the false Sun Wukong is just such a six－eared macaque. Wherever he stands he can know what is happening hundreds of miles away and hear everything that is said. That is why he has such wonderful hearing, brilliant perception, and knowledge of the past, the future, and all beings; that is why he looks and sounds just like Wukong. He is a six－eared macaque."

As soon as the macaque heard the Tathagata Buddha say who he really was, he started shaking with fear and took a great leap to get away. The Tathagata at once ordered his hosts to strike, and the macaque was immediately surrounded by the four Bodhisattvas, eight

vajrapanis, five hundred arhats, three thousand protectors, and all the monks, nuns and lay people, as well as Guanyin and Moksa. The Great Sage Monkey rushed forward too.

"Don't hit him, Wukong," said the Tathagata. "I shall capture him for you." The macaque's fur stood on end as he realized that there would be no escape, so he shook himself and turned straight into a bee who started to fly straight up, only to fall down again as the Tathagata's golden begging bowl was clapped over him. The host all thought he had got away. "Stop talking," said the Buddha with a smile. "The evil spirit has not escaped. He is under my bowl." They all surged forward to see him in his true form of a six-eared macaque as the bowl was lifted.

The Great Sage could not restrain himself. Swinging his iron cudgel he killed the demon with a single blow to the head, and that is why this species is now extinct. It was more than the Tathagata could bear.

"This is terrible," he said, "this is terrible."

"You shouldn't be sorry for him," said the Great Sage. "He wounded my master and stole our bundles.

According to the law he should get his head cut off for wounding in the course of theft and daylight robbery."

"Go back at once to escort the Tang Priest here to fetch the scriptures," said the Tathagata.

The Great Sage kowtowed to him in thanks and said, "I wish to report to the Tathagata that my master definitely refuses to have me. The journey would be a lot of trouble for nothing. I beg you in your kindness, Tathagata, to say the Band-loosening Spell. Then I can take this gold band off and give it back to you, and you can let me return to lay life."

"Stop those silly ideas and behave yourself," said the Tathagata. "I shall send Guanyin to take you back to him. Of course he'll accept you. Protect him well, and when you succeed and reach ultimate bliss there will be a place on a lotus throne for you too."

When the Bodhisattva Guanyin heard this she put her hands together to thank him for his mercy then took Wukong off by cloud followed by Moksa and the white parrot. They were soon back at the thatched cottage by the road. As soon as Friar Sand saw them he hurried out to ask the master to greet the Bodhisattva at the door.

"Tang Priest," she said, "it was a six—eared macaque pretending to be Wukong who hit you the other day.

Fortunately the Tathagata could tell who he was, and Wukong has now killed him. You must now take Wukong back. There are many demon obstacles on the way ahead and you must have his protection if you are to reach Vulture Peak, see the Buddha and fetch the scriptures, so stop being angry with him."

"I shall respectfully obey," Sanzang replied.

Just as he was kowtowing in thanks there was the roar of a whirlwind from the East carrying Pig with the two bundles on his back. Seeing the Bodhisattva the idiot kowtowed to her and said, "Your disciple left the master the other day and went back to the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit to look for this luggage. I found the imitation Tang Priest and imitation Pig and killed the pair of them. They were both monkeys. Then I went inside and found the bundles. Nothing's missing— —I've checked them over. So I came straight back by wind. What happened to the two Monkeys?"

The Bodhisattva then told him how the Tathagata had told the two of them apart. The idiot was delighted and gave thanks at great length. Master and disciples then said farewell to the Bodhisattva, who went back to the sea. The four of them were now once more of a single will and a single mind; all grievances had been washed away and anger removed. They thanked their hosts in the thatched cottage, retied the luggage, saddled up the horse, and headed West. Indeed:

A separation on the journey muddled the Five Elements;

At the demon—subduing gathering enlightenment returned.

The spirit returned to the house of the mind and dhyana was calmed;
When the six perceptions were controlled the elixir was completed.

If you don't know how long it was till Sanzang saw the Buddha and asked for the scriptures after setting out again listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 59

Sanzang's Way Is Blocked at the Fiery Mountains

Monkey First Tries to Borrow the Plantain Fan

The many species are at root the same;

Chapter 59

810

Journey to the West

All flows into the boundless sea.

Every thought and worry is in vain;

All types and forms together blend.

When the achievement is complete

Great will be the full and shining dharma.

Do not allow your differences to divide:

Keep everything together.

Gather all into the elixir furnace,

Refine it till it is red as darkest gold.

Then in its brilliance and beauty

On dragons it may ride at will.

The story tells how Sanzang took back Brother Monkey as the Bodhisattva had instructed him and headed towards the Western Heaven, united in heart with Pig and Friar Sand. They were no longer in two minds, and the ape and the horse were firmly under control. Time shot by like an arrow; days and nights alternated with the speed of a shuttle. After the scorching heat of summer they were now in the frosts of late autumn. What they saw was:

The sparse clouds blown away by the wild West wind,

Cranes calling in the distant hills amid the frosty woods.

This is a chilly time

When mountain rivers seem longer than ever.

The swan returns through the Northern frontier passes;

Migrating birds go back to their Southern fields.

The traveler feels lonely on the road;

Monastic robes do not keep out the cold.

Chapter 59

811

Journey to the West

As master and disciples pressed ahead they began to feel hotter and hotter in the warm air. "It is autumn now, so why is it getting hotter again?" Sanzang asked, reining in his horse.

"Don't know," said Pig. "There's a country in the West, Sihali, where the sun sets. People call it 'the end of the sky'. At about six o'clock every evening the king sends people on the city walls to band drums and blow bugles to cover the sound of the sea boiling. That's because when the fire of the sun falls into the Western Ocean there's a great seething noise like something burning being plunged into water. If they didn't cover the noise with their drums and bugles the shock would kill all the little children in the city. That's where I think we are ——the place where the sun sets." When the Great Sage heard this he could not help laughing.

"Don't talk such nonsense, you idiot. We're a long way from Sihali yet. The way our master keeps dithering and changing his mind we won't get there in three lifetimes, even if we go on from childhood to old age, then to childhood again, and then to another old age and a third childhood."

"Tell me then, brother," said Pig, "if this isn't where the sun sets why's it so scorching hot?"

"The seasons must be out of joint," said Friar Sand. "I expect they're following summer rituals here although it's autumn." Just as the three disciples were arguing they saw a farm by the side of the road. It had a red tiled roof, red brick walls, and red painted doors, windows and

furniture. It was red everywhere.

"Wukong," said Sanzang, dismounting, "go to that house and find out why it's so burning hot."

The Great Sage put his gold–banded cudgel away, neatened his clothes, and swaggered along the road like a fine gentleman. When he reached the gate to have a look an old man suddenly appeared from inside. This is what he looked like:

He wore a robe of hemp–cloth,

Not quite brown or red,

A sunhat of woven bamboo,

In between black and green.

The knobby stick in his hand

Was neither crooked nor straight.

His long boots of leather

Were not new, but not yet old.

His face was the color of copper,

His beard bleached white like yarn.

Long eyebrows shaded his jade–blue eyes

And his smile showed golden teeth.

The old man had a shock when he looked up to see Monkey. "Where are you from, you freak?" he asked, steadying himself on his stick. "What are you doing at my gate?"

"Venerable patron," replied Monkey with a bow, "don't be afraid. I'm no freak. My master and we three disciples have been sent by the Great Tang emperor in the East to fetch the scriptures from the West.

As we've now reached your residence I have come to ask you why it's so boiling hot here and what this place is called."

Only then did the old man stop feeling worried and reply with a smile, "Please don't take offence, reverend sir.

My old eyes are rather dim and I failed to recognize your distinguished self."

"There's no need to be so polite," said Monkey. "Which road is your master on?" the old man asked.

"That's him, standing on the main road due South," Monkey replied.

"Ask him over, ask him over," the old man replied, to Monkey's pleasure. Monkey waved to them, and Sanzang came over with Pig and Friar Sand leading the white horse and carrying the luggage. They all bowed to the old man.

The old man was at the same time delighted by Sanzang's fine appearance and alarmed by Pig's and Friar Sand's remarkable ugliness. Inviting them in, he told the younger members of the family to bring tea and cook a meal. Hearing all this Sanzang rose to his feet to thank the old man and ask, "Could you tell me, sir, why it has turned so hot again although it is autumn now?"

"These are the Fiery Mountains," the old man replied. "We don't have springs or autumns here. It's hot all the year round."

"Where are the mountains?" Sanzang asked. "Do they block the way to the West?"

"It's impossible to get to the West," the old man replied. "The mountains are about twenty miles from here.

You have to cross them to get to the West, but they're over 250 miles of flame. Not a blade of grass can grow anywhere around. Even if you had a skull of bronze and a body of iron you would melt trying to cross them."

This answer made Sanzang turn pale with horror; he dared not to ask any more questions.

Just then a young man pushing a red barrow stopped by the gate, shouting, "Cakes! Cakes!" The Great Sage pulled out one of his hairs and turned it into a copper coin with which he bought a cake off the

young man.

The man accepted the money and without a worry he lifted the cover off his barrow to release a cloud of hot steam, took out a cake and passed it to Monkey. When Monkey took it in his hand it was as hot as a burning coal or a red—hot nail in a furnace.

Just look at him as he keeps tossing the cake from one hand to another shouting, "It's hot, it's hot, I can't eat it."

"If you can't stand heat don't come here," the young man replied. "It's always this hot here."

"You don't understand at all, my lad," said Monkey. "As the saying goes, If it's never too cold and it's never too hot

Chapter 59

The five kinds of grain will be harvested not."

"If it's so hot here how do you get the flour to make your cakes?" To this the young man said,

"You ask me where we can obtain the flour for the pan:

Politely we request it from Immortal Iron Fan."

"What can you tell me about this immortal?" Monkey asked.

"The immortal has a plantain fan," the young man replied. "If you ask it to, the fan puts out the fire at the first wave, makes a wind blow at the second wave, and brings rain at the third wave. That is how we can sow and reap the crops to support ourselves. Without it nothing would be able to grow."

On hearing this Monkey rushed back inside, gave the cakes to Sanzang, and said, "Don't worry, Master: Don't get upset about what's going to happen the year after next. East these cakes up and I'll tell you all about it."

Sanzang took the cakes and said to the old man, "Please have a cake, sir."

"I could not possibly eat one of your cakes before we've offered you any of our tea and food," the old man replied. "Sir," Monkey replied, "there's no need to give us food or tea. But could you tell me where the Iron Fan Immortal lives?"

"What do you want to know about the immortal for?" the old man asked. "The cake–seller told me just now that the immortal has a plantain fan," said Monkey. "If you borrow it the first wave puts the fire out, the second raises a wind and the third brings rain. That's why you're able to sow and reap the crops to support yourselves. I want to go to ask the immortal to come so we can put out the flames on the Fiery Mountains and cross them. And you'll be able to sow, reap and live in peace."

"It's a nice idea," said the old man, "but as you have no presents the immortal wouldn't come."

"What sort of presents would be wanted?" Sanzang asked.

"Every ten years," the old man replied, "we go to visit the immortal. We take four pigs and four sheep, all decorated with flowers and red ribbons, delicious fruit in season, chickens, geese and the best wine. We bathe ourselves and go very reverently to pay a respectful visit to the mountain and ask the immortal to leave the cave and come here to perform magic."

"Where is this mountain?" Monkey asked. "What's it called? How far is it from here? I'm going there to ask for the fan."

"It lies Southwest of here," the old man said, "and it's called Mount Turquoise Cloud. When we believers go to worship at the magic mountain the journey takes us a month as it's about 485 miles altogether."

"No problem," said Monkey. "I can be there and back in no time."

Chapter 59

"Wait a minute," said the old man. "Have something to eat and drink first, and we'll get some provisions ready for the journey. You'll need two people to go with you. Nobody lives along the way and there are many wolves and tigers. It'll take you many a day to get there. You

must be serious about it."

"No need," said Monkey with a laugh, "no need. I'm off." As soon as he had said that he disappeared.

"My lord!" the old man said in astonishment. "He's a god who can ride clouds."

We shall say no more of how the family redoubled their offerings to the Tang Priest, but tell of Monkey, who arrived at Mount Turquoise Cloud in an instant, brought his auspicious light to a stop and started looking for the entrance to the cave. He heard the sound of an axe and saw a woodcutter felling a tree in the forest on the mountainside. Hurrying forward, Monkey heard him saying.

"I recognize the ancient woods amid the clouds;

The path is overgrown; the hillside steep.

From Western hills I see the morning rain;

Returning to the South the ford's too deep."

Going closer to the woodman Monkey said, "Greetings, woodman." Putting down his axe the woodcutter returned his courtesy and asked him where he was going. "May I ask if this is Mount Turquoise Cloud?" said Monkey.

"Yes," the woodcutter replied.

"Where is the Iron Fan Immortal's Plantain Cave?" Monkey asked.

"There's a Plantain Cave here," the woodcutter replied, "but no Iron Fan Immortal, only a Princess Iron Fan.

She's also called Raksasi."

"They say the immortal has a plantain fan that can put out the flames of the Fiery Mountains. Is that her?"

"Yes, yes," the woodman said. "She's a sage and she has this treasure that puts out fire. Because she protects the people who live over yonder they call her the Iron Fan Immortal. We have no need of her here, so we just call her Raksasi. She's the wife of the Bull Demon King."

Monkey went pale with shock at the news. "Another person who's got

it in for me," he thought. "When I subdued the Red Boy the other year he said this bitch was his mother. When I met the Red Boy's uncle at Childfree Cave on Mount Offspring Dissolved he refused me the water and wanted revenge. Now I'm up against his parents. How am I ever going to borrow the fan?"

Seeing Monkey deep in thought and sighing endlessly, the woodcutter said with a smile, "Venerable sir, you're a man of religion. You shouldn't have any worries. Just follow this path East and you'll be at the Chapter 59

Plantain Cave within a couple of miles."

"I'll be frank with you, woodcutter," said Monkey. "I'm the senior disciple of the Tang Priest who has been sent by the Tang emperor in the East to go to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. The other year I had words with Raksasi's son Red Boy at the Fire – cloud Cave, and I'm afraid that Raksasi may refuse to let me have the fan because she's still nursing a grudge. That's why I'm worried."

"A real man knows how to play it by ear," the woodcutter replied. "Just ask for the fan. Forget about your old quarrel. I'm sure you'll be able to borrow it."

Monkey made a respectful chant and said, "Thank you very much for your advice. I'm off."

Brother Monkey then took his leave of the woodcutter and went straight to the mouth of the Plantain Cave.

Both doors were tightly shut, and the scenery outside was magnificent. It was a splendid place. Indeed: The rocks were the hones of the mountain,

And also the spirit of the earth.

Clouds at sunset held night rain,

And mosses lent the freshness of their green.

The towering peaks outdid those of Penglai;

The fragrant calm was like a magic island's.

Wild cranes were perching in the lofty pines

While warblers sang in the weeping willows.

This was indeed an ancient site,

The home of immortals for ten thousand years.

The resplendent phoenix sang in the parasol trees

While azure dragons hid in the running waters.

Vines hung over the winding paths,

And creepers covered the steps of stone.

Apes on the cliffs screeched to welcome the rising moon;

In tall trees birds sang for joy at the clear blue sky.

The groves of bamboo were as cool as if it had rained;

The flowers along the path were embroidered velvet.

At times a cloud of white would blow from a distant peak;

It had no single form as it drifted in the wind.

"Open up, Brother Bull," Monkey shouted as he went up to the doors. They opened with a creak, and out came a young girl carrying a flower basket in her hand and hoe over her shoulder. Indeed: Though clad in rags and dressed in no fine array,

Her face was full of spirit, her heart set on the Way.

Monkey went up to her with his hands together in front of his chest and said, "Would you kindly tell the princess that I'm a monk going to the West to fetch the scriptures. I'm here to beg the loan of her plantain fan as we can't get across the Fiery Mountains."

"What monastery are you from," the girl asked, "and what is your name? Please tell me so that I can announce you."

"I'm from the East," Monkey replied, "and my name is Sun Wukong."

The girl went back into the cave, knelt to the princess, and said, "Your Highness, there's a monk from the East called Sun Wukong outside who would like to see you to ask for the loan of the plantain fan to cross the Fiery Mountains." The name Sun Wukong was like a pinch of salt thrown into a flame, or oil poured on a fire. Her face went bright red and evil anger flared up in her heart.

"So that damned monkey's here at last," she said with hatred. "Girl," she shouted, "fetch me my armor and my weapons." She then put on her armor, tied her pair of blue-tipped swords at her waist, fastened it all firmly, and went out. Monkey slipped over to the entrance to see what she looked like and this is what he saw: A flowered kerchief tied around her head,

A cloud-patterned robe of quilted brocade.

A belt of two tiger sinews round her waist,

Revealing a skirt of embroidered silk.

Her shoes like phoenix beaks were but three inches long;

Her trousers in dragon-beard style were adorned with gold.

Brandishing her swords she gave out angry shouts;

She looked as lethal as the goddess of the moon.

"Where's Sun Wukong?" Raksasi shouted as she came out of her cave.

Monkey stepped forward, bowed, and replied, "Monkey offers his respectful greetings, sister-in-law."

"I'm no sister-in-law of yours," she shouted angrily, "and I'll have no greetings from you."

"Your worthy husband the Bull Demon King was once my sworn brother," Monkey replied. "There were seven of us altogether. As I learn that you are my brother Bull's good lady, of course I must call

you sister – in – law."

"Damned ape," said Raksasi, "if you're my husband's sworn brother why did you have to do that terrible thing to our boy?"

"Who is your son?" Monkey asked, as if he did not know.

"He's the Red Boy, the Boy Sage King of the Fire – cloud Cave by Withered Pine Ravine on Mount Hao,"

Raksasi replied. "You ruined him, and now you've come to our door to pay with your life. We've been longing to get our revenge on you but didn't know where to find you. You'll get no mercy from me."

Putting on the broadest of smiles, Monkey replied, "You haven't gone into it thoroughly enough, sister – in – law. You've no reason to be so angry with me Your good son had captured my master and would have steamed or boiled him if the Bodhisattva hadn't taken the boy as his disciple and rescued my master. He's now the page Sudhana on the Bodhisattva's island and he's accepted the pursuit of the true reward from her.

He is now beyond life and death and above filth and purity. He will live as long as heaven, earth, the sun and the moon. But far from thanking me for saving his life you're getting angry at me. That's wrong of you."

"You smooth – tongued ape," Raksasi snapped back. "My boy may be alive, but when is he ever going to come here? When am I going to see him again?"

"It'll be easy for you to see your son again," Monkey replied, still smiling. "Just lend me the fan to put the fires out. When I've taken my master across the mountains I'll go to the Bodhisattava's place in the Southern Ocean and ask him to come here to see you and give your fan back. No problem. Then you'll be able to see that he's completely unharmed. If he'd been wounded at all you'd have had every right to be angry with me.

But he's as handsome as ever. You ought to be thanking me."

To this Raksasi's reply was: "Shut up, ape fiend! Stick your head out for me to hack with my sword. If you can stand the pain I'll lend you the plantain fan. If you can't you'll be going straight down to Hell to see King Yama."

Monkey then clasped his hands together in front of him and replied with a smile, "Enough said, sister – in – law.

I'll stretch my bald head out and you can take as many hacks as you like until you're exhausted. But you must lend me the fan." With no more argument Raksasi swung both of her swords around and brought them down with loud thunks a dozen or more times on Monkey's head. He was not bothered at all. Raksasi was so frightened by this that she turned to run away.

"Where are you going, sister – in – law?" Monkey said. "Hurry up and lend me that fan."

Chapter 59

"My treasure isn't something to be lent out casually," Raksasi replied.

"Well," said Monkey, "if you refuse now you'll just have to try a taste of your brother – in – law's cudgel."

The splendid Monkey King held on to her with one hand while pulling his cudgel out from his ear with the other. With one wave it became as thick as a ricebowl. Raksasi broke free from his grip and raised her swords to strike back at him. Monkey started swinging his cudgel to hit her with and the fight began in front of Mount Turquoise Cloud. All talk of kinship was forgotten and their minds full of hatred alone. It was a fine battle: The woman had worked hard to make herself a monster;

She loathed the ape and would avenge her son.

Although Monkey was seething with fury,

He would have made concessions for his master's sake.

First he had asked to borrow the plantain fan,

Being patient and gentle, not fierce.

In ignorance Raksasi hacked with her sword,

While Monkey decided to speak of kinship.

Women should never fight with men,

For men are harder and can crush them.

Terrible was the gold – banded cudgel,

Fine were the movements of the blue frost – bladed sword,

With blows to face and head,

As both of them grimly refused to yield.

Blocking to left and right they used their martial skill;

Great was the cunning with which they stood or fell back.

Just when they both were beginning to enjoy themselves

The sun set in the Western sky before they noticed.

Raksasi made ghosts and deities feel small

With many a wave of her true magic fan.

Chapter 59

819

Journey to the West

Raksasi and Monkey fought it out till evening. As Monkey's cudgel struck so hard and his technique was so flawless she realized that she would never be able to beat him. She brought out her plantain fan and with a single wave blew Monkey right out of sight. There was no way he could stand his ground. With that she went back to her cave in triumph.

The Great Sage was thrown around in the air, unable to come down to earth or find any refuge. He was like a dead leaf in a whirlwind or a fallen blossom carried along by a torrent.

Only after a whole night's buffeting did he manage to land on a mountain the next morning and hold on hard to a rock by putting both arms round it. He needed a long time to calm himself and take a good look around before he realized that he was on Little Mount Sumeru.

"What a terrible woman," he said to himself with a deep sigh. "How ever did she get me here? I remember coming here once to ask the Bodhisattva Lingji to subdue the Yellow Wind Monster and rescue my master.

The Yellow Wind Ridge is over a thousand miles South of here, so as I've been blown back from the West I must have come thousands and thousands of miles. I'll go down and find out some more from the Bodhisattva Lingji before I go back."

Just as he was making his mind up he heard a resounding gong, so he hurried down the mountain and straight to the dhyana monastery. The lay brother on the gate recognized Monkey and went in to announce, "The hairy–faced Great Sage who asked the Bodhisattva to subdue the Yellow Wind Monster some years back is here again."

Realizing that this must be Sun Wukong, the Bodhisattva hurried down from his throne to greet him and lead him inside with the words, "Allow me to congratulate you. I suppose you have fetched the scriptures now."

"It'll be a long time yet," said Monkey, "a long time."

"But why are you visiting my mountain if you have yet to reach the Thunder Monastery?" the Bodhisattva asked.

"Since in your great kindness you subdued the Yellow Wind Monster for me some years ago," Monkey replied, "goodness only knows how much we've suffered on our journey. Now we are at the Fiery Mountains, but we can't cross them. When I asked the local people they told me about an Iron Fan Immortal who had an iron fan that could put the fires out. I went to visit the immortal, only to discover that she's the wife of the Bull Demon King and the Red Boy's mother. I told her that her son is now Guanyin Bodhisattva's page, but she has it in for me because she can't see him. She refused to lend me her fan and fought me. When she realized that my cudgel was too much for her she waved her fan and sent me hurling through the air till I landed here.

That's why I've come blundering into your monastery to ask the way back. How far is it from here to the Fiery Mountains?"

"The woman is called Raksasi, or Princess Iron Fan," replied Lingji with a smile. "That plantain fan of hers is a miraculous treasure formed by heaven and earth behind Mount Kunlun ever since primal chaos was first separated. This leaf is the very essence of the negative

Yin principle, which is why it can put out fire. If she fans somebody with it he'll be blown 27,000 miles before that negative wind drops. But this mountain of mine is only some 17,000 miles from the Fiery Mountains. You must have stopped here because you have the power to delay clouds, Great Sage. No ordinary mortal would have been able to stop."

"She's terrible," said Monkey. "How ever is my master going to get across those mountains?"

"Don't worry, Great Sage," Lingji replied. "The Tang Priest is fated to succeed on this journey with you."

"How can you tell?" Monkey asked. "Many years age when the Tathagata gave me his instructions," Lingji replied, "he presented me with a Wind–fixing Pill and a Flying Dragon Staff. The Flying Dragon Staff was used to subdue the Yellow Wind Monster, but I haven't yet tried out the Wind–fixing Pill and I'll give it to you today. It'll stop the fan from being able to move you. You'll just have to ask to get it and put the fire out with it. You'll have an instant success."

Monkey bowed deeply and expressed profound thanks. The Bodhisattva then produced a brocade bag from his sleeve and took out of it the Wind–fixing Pill. This he gave to Monkey to sew up securely inside the lapel of his tunic. "I won't detain you here any longer," Lingji said as he saw Monkey out through doors. "Head Northwest and that will get you to Raksasi's mountain."

Taking his leave of Lingji Monkey rode his somersault cloud straight back to Mount Turquoise Cloud and was there in a moment. "Open up, open up!" he shouted, hammering on the doors with his iron cudgel.

"Monkey's here to borrow the fan."

This so alarmed the servant girl inside the doors that she ran back and reported, "Your Highness, he's here to borrow the fan again." The news frightened Raksasi, who thought, "That damned monkey really has got some powers. If I fan anyone else with my treasure they go 27,000 miles before stopping. How can he be back so soon after being blown away? This time I'll fan him two or three times and he'll never be able

to find his way back here."

She sprang to her feet, tied all her armor firmly on, and went out of the cave with her swords in her hands shouting, "Sun the Novice, aren't you afraid of me? Why have you come back here to get yourself killed?"

"Don't be so stingy, sister – in – law," said Monkey with a smile. "You've got to lend me it. I'll bring it back as soon as I've escorted the Tang Priest across the Fiery Mountains. I give you my word as a gentleman. I'm not the sort of low creature who borrows things but doesn't give them back."

"Damned macaque," Raksasi shouted back. "You're outrageous, and you understand nothing. I've got to avenge the loss of my son, so how could I possibly be prepared to lend you my fan? Clear off if you don't want a taste of my sword." The Great Sage, not at all afraid, struck back at her hands with his iron cudgel, and the two of them fought six or seven rounds. By then Raksasi's arms were becoming too tired to wield the swords, while Brother Monkey was feeling strong and fighting well. Seeing that the balance of the fight was tilting against her, Raksasi took out the fan and fanned it once in Monkey's direction.

He stood unmoved, put his iron cudgel away, and said with a chuckle, "This time it's different. Fan as much as you like. If I move an inch I'm no man." She fanned twice more and still he did not move. By now she was so alarmed that she put her pride and joy away at once, went straight back into the cave, and shut the doors firmly.

When Monkey saw this he used magic. He tore the lapel of his tunic open, put the Wind – fixing Pill in his mouth, shook himself, turned into the tiniest of insects, and squeezed in through the crack between the doors, where he saw Raksasi shouting, "I'm thirsty, I'm thirsty. Quick, bring me some tea." The servant girl who attended her fetched a pot of the best tea and poured a large cup of it so noisily that the surface was frothy.

Monkey was delighted. With a quiet buzz of his wings he flew under the froth. Raksasi was so parched that she drained the tea in two gulps.

Once inside her stomach Monkey reverted to his own form and shouted at the top of his voice,

"Sister – in – law, lend me the fan."

Raksasi went pale with shock. "Little ones," she called to her underlings, "are the front doors shut?"

"Yes," they all said.

"If the doors are shut then how can Sun the Novice be inside the cave and shouting?" she asked.

"He's shouting from inside you," the servant girl replied.

"Where are you playing your conjuring tricks, Sun the Novice?" Raksasi asked.

"I've never been able to do conjuring tricks in all my life," Monkey replied. "My magic and my powers are all real. I'm fooling around in your own in-sides, good sister-in-law. I've just seen your lungs and your liver. I know you're very hungry and thirsty, so I'll give you a bowlful to quench your thirst." With that he stamped his foot, giving Raksasi an unbearable cramp in her stomach that left her sitting groaning on the floor. "Don't try to say no, sister-in-law," Monkey then said. "I'm giving you a pastry in case you're hungry." He butted upwards, causing such a violent heart pain that she could only roll around on the ground, her face sallow and her lips white from agony.

"Spare me, brother-in-law, spare me," was all she could say.

Only then did Monkey stop hitting and kicking. "So you call me brother-in-law now, do you?" he said. "I'll spare your life for my brother Bull's sake. Get me the fan, and quick."

"You shall have it, brother-in-law, you shall have it," she said. "Come out and get it."

"Fetch it and show it to me," Monkey said. She told the servant girl to fetch a plantain fan and stand holding it beside her. Monkey poked his head up her throat to see it and said, "As I'm sparing your life, sister-in-law, I won't smash my way out under your ribs. I'll come out through your mouth. Open wide three times." With that Raksasi opened her mouth and Monkey turned back into the tiny insect to fly out and alight on the fan. Not realizing what had happened Raksasi

went on to open her mouth twice more.

"Come out, brother–in–law," she said.

Monkey turned back into himself, took the fan and said, "Here I am. Thanks for the loan." With that he strode forward while the underlings opened the doors to let him out of the cave.

The Great Sage then turned his cloud around and headed back East. A moment later he had landed the cloud and was standing by the red brick wall. Pig was very pleased indeed to see him. "Master," he said, "Monkey's here! He's back!" Sanzang went out with the old man of the farm and Friar Sand to greet him, and they all went back inside.

Propping the fan against the wall, Monkey asked, "Tell me sir, is this the fan?"

"Yes, yes," the old man said.

"This is a great achievement, disciple," said Sanzang. "Fetching this treasure must have cost you a great deal of trouble."

"No trouble at all," said Monkey. "Do you know who that Iron Fan Immortal is? She's Raksasi, the wife of the Bull Demon King and the Red Boy's mother. Her other name is Princess Iron Fan. I found her outside her cave and asked to borrow the fan, but all she could talk of were her old grudges. She took a few cuts at me Chapter 59

with her swords, but when I gave her a bit of a scare with the cudgel she fanned me with the fan and blew me all the way to Little Mount Sumeru. I was lucky enough to be able to see the Bodhisattva Lingji who gave me a tablet that stops winds and showed me the way back to Mount Turquoise Cloud. Then I saw Raksasi again, but this time her fan did not move me an inch, so she went back into her cave and I turned into a tiny insect to fly back in after her. When the damned woman–asked for some tea I slipped in under the froth at the top, got inside her, and started giving her a few punches and kicks. She couldn't take the pain. She kept saying, 'Spare me, brother–in–law, spare me.' As she agreed to lend me the fan I spared her life and took the fan. I'll give it back to her after we've crossed the Fiery Mountains." When Sanzang heard this he was extremely grateful.

Master and disciples then took their leave of the old man and traveled about fifteen miles West. The heat was becoming unbearable. "The soles of my feet are being roasted," Friar Sand complained.

"My trotters are getting burnt and it hurts," said Pig. The horse was going much faster than usual too. The ground was so hot that they could not stop, but every step was painful.

"Please dismount, Master," said Monkey, "and brothers, stay here while I use the fan to put the fire out. When the wind and the rain come the ground will be a lot cooler and we'll be able to get across the mountains." He then raised the fan and fanned it hard once in the direction of the fire: tongues of flame rose above the mountains. He fanned again, and they were a hundred times as high. He fanned a third time, and now they were a couple of miles high and beginning to burn him. Monkey fled, but not before two patches of fur had been burnt away. He ran straight back to the Tang Priest and said, "Hurry back, hurry back, the flames are coming."

The master remounted and headed back East with Pig and Friar Sand some seven miles before stopping and asking, "What happened, Wukong?"

"It's the wrong one," Monkey said, flinging the fan down, "it's the wrong one. The damned woman fooled me."

When Sanzang heard this he frowned and felt thoroughly depressed. "What are we to do?" he sobbed, the tears flowing freely down his cheeks.

"Brother," said Pig, "why did you come back in such a mad rush and send us back here?"

"The first time I fanned there were flames," Monkey replied, "the second time the fire got fiercer, and the third time the flames were a couple of miles high. If I hadn't run fast all my fur would have been burnt off."

"But you're always telling us that you can't be hurt by thunder and lightning and that fire can't burn you," said Pig with a laugh. "How come you're afraid of fire now?"

"Idiot," said Monkey, "you don't understand anything. The other times I was ready: that's why I wasn't hurt.

Today I didn't make any flame—avoiding spells or use magic to

defend myself. That's why two patches of my fur were singed."

"If the fire's so fierce and there's no other way to the West what are we going to do?" Friar Sand asked.

"We'll just have to find somewhere where there isn't any fire," Pig replied.

"Which way will that be?" Sanzang asked.

"East, North or South: there's no fire those ways," said Pig. "But which way are the scriptures?"

Chapter 59

"Only in the West," Pig replied.

"I only want to go where the scriptures are," Sanzang said.

"We're well and truly struck," said Friar Sand. "Where there are scriptures there's fire, and where there's no fire there are no scriptures."

While master and disciples were talking this nonsense they heard someone call, "Don't get upset, Great Sage.

Come and have some vegetarian food before you take your discussions any further." The four of them looked round to see an old man wearing a cloak that floated in the wind and a hat the shape of a half moon. In his hand he held a dragon—headed stick, and on his legs were boots of iron. With him was a demon with the beak of an eagle and the cheeks of a fish carrying on his head a copper bowl full of steamed buns, millet cakes, cooked millet and rice.

The old man bowed to them on the road to the West and said, "I am the local god of the Fiery Mountains. As I know that you are escorting this holy monk, Great Sage, and can't go any further I have brought this meal as an offering."

"Eating doesn't matter," Monkey replied. "When are these fires going to be put out so that my master can cross the mountains?"

"If you want to put the fires out you must first ask Raksasi to lend you

the plantain fan," the local god said.

Monkey went to the side of the path, picked the fan up, and said, "This is it, isn't it? The more I fan the flames the more fiercely they burn. Why?"

"Because it's not the real one," said the local deity with a laugh when he looked at it. "She fooled you."

"Then how am I to get the real one?" Monkey said.

The local god bowed again and had a slight smile on his face as he replied, "If you want to borrow the real plantain fan you will have to ask the Strongarm King."

If you don't know all about the Strongarm King listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 60

The Bull Demon King Gives Up the Fight to Go to a Feast

Monkey Tries the Second Time to Borrow the Plantain Fan

"The Strongarm King is the Bull Demon King," the local god explained.

"Did he set these mountains ablaze and pretend they were the Fiery Mountains?" Monkey asked.

"No, no," the local god replied. "If you'll promise to forgive me for doing so, Great Sage, I'll speak frankly."

"What's there to forgive?" Monkey said. "Speak frankly."

"You started this fire, Great Sage," the local god replied.

"That's nonsense," said Monkey angrily. "I wasn't here. Do you take me for an arsonist?"

"You don't realize who I am," the local god said. "These mountains haven't always been here. When you made havoc in Heaven five

hundred years ago and were captured by the Illustrious Sage Erlang you were escorted to Lord Lao Zi, put in the Eight Trigrams Furnace and refined. When the furnace was opened you kicked it over, and some of its bricks that still had fire in them fell here as the Fiery Mountains. I used to be one of the Taoist boys who looked after the furnace in the Tushita Palace, but Lord Lao Zi was so angry with me for failing in my duty that he sent me down to be the local god here."

"I was wondering why you were dressed like that," said Pig forcefully, "you're a Taoist turned local god."

"Tell me why I need to find the Strongarm King," said Monkey, only half–convinced.

"He's Raksasi's husband," the local god said. "He's abandoned her now and gone to live in the Cloud–touching Cave in Mount Thunder Piled. A fox king there who'd lived for ten thousand years died leaving an only daughter, Princess Jade, with property worth a million but nobody to manage it. Two years ago she visited the Bull Demon King and found out about his tremendous magical powers. She decided to give him her property if he'd come to live in her cave as her husband. So the Bull Demon King abandoned Raksasi and hasn't been back to see her for ages. If you can find him, Great Sage, and persuade him to come here you'll be able to borrow the real fan. First, you'll be able to blow the flames out to take your master across the mountains.

Second, you'll put an end to this disastrous fire so that the land here can come back to life. And third, I'll be pardoned and allowed to go back to Heaven and return to live under Lord Lao Zi's command."

"Where is Mount Thunder Piled, and how far is it from here?"

"Due South," the local deity said, "and over a thousand miles." Once he knew this Monkey told Friar Sand and Pig to look after the master and ordered the local god to stay with them. There was then a roaring like the wind as he disappeared.

In less than an hour he saw a high mountain that touched the sky. Bringing his cloud down he stood on the peak to look around, and this is what he saw:

Was it tall?

Its peak touched the azure sky.

Was it big?

Its roots went down to the Yellow Springs.

While the sun warmed the front of the mountain

The winds behind the ridge blew cold.

On the sun – warmed front of the mountain

The flowers and trees never knew what winter was;

In the cold winds behind the ridge

Chapter 60

825

Journey to the West

The ice and frost did not even melt in summer.

From a dragon pool a river flowed in gullies;

Flowers bloomed early by the tiger's cave in the crag.

The river split into a thousand jade streams;

The flowers bloomed together like brocade.

On the twisting ridge grew twisted trees;

Beside the knotted rocks were knotted pines.

Indeed there were

A high mountain,

Steep ridges,

Sheer precipices,

Fragrant flowers,

Fine fruit,

Red creepers,

Purple bamboo,

Green pines,

Turquoise willows.

It looked the same throughout the seasons;

Changeless forever, like a dragon.

After looking for a long time the Great Sage walked down from the towering peak to find his way through the mountain. Just when he was feeling bewildered a slender young woman came towards him holding a spray of fragrant orchid. The Great Sage slipped behind a grotesque rock and took a good look at her. This is what she was like:

A ravishing beauty to enchant a nation

Walking so slowly on her little lotus feet.

Her face was like Wang Qiang or the woman of Chu.

She was a talking flower,

Scented jade.

The hair was swept down from her coiffure like jade – blue crows; The green of her eyes made one think of autumn floods.

Her silken skirt showed a glimpse of tiny feet;

From her turquoise sleeves came long and elegant wrists.

She would put anyone into the mood for love;

Red were her lips, and white her pearly teeth.

Her skin was as smooth and her brows as fine as the Jinjiang beauty; She was more than a match for Wenjun or Xue Tao.

As the young woman slowly approached the rock the Great Sage bowed to her and said, "Where are you going, Bodhisattva?" Before he spoke she had not noticed him; but when she looked up and saw how

hideous the Great Sage was she was petrified, unable to move forward or back.

All she could do was shiver and force herself to reply, "Where are you from? How dare you question me?"

"If I tell her about fetching the scriptures and borrowing the fan," the Great Sage thought, "this damn woman might be some relation of the Bull Demon King's. I'd better pretend to be some kinsman of the Bull Demon King come to invite him to a banquet."

When he would not answer her questions the woman turned angry and shouted, "Who are you and how dare you question me?"

"I'm from Mount Turquoise Cloud," Monkey replied with a bow and a forced smile. "I don't know the way as it's my first time here. Could I ask you, Bodhisattva, if this is Mount Thunder Piled?"

"It is," she replied.

"Where might I find the Cloud—touching Cave?" the Great Sage asked.

"What do you want to find it for?" the woman asked.

"I've been sent by Princess Iron Fan in the Plantain Cave on Mount Turquoise Cloud with an invitation for the Bull Demon King," Monkey replied.

The moment the woman heard him speak of Princess Iron Fan sending an invitation to the Bull Demon King she flared into a rage and went crimson from ear to ear.

Chapter 60

"She ought to know better, the low bitch. It's less than two years since the Bull Demon King came here, and goodness only knows how much jewelry, gold, silver, fine silk and brocade I've given her since then. I send her firewood every year and rice every month. She's doing nicely thank you. So what's the shameless hussy doing, sending him an invitation?"

When the Great Sage heard this and realized that she was Princess Jade he deliberately pulled out his iron cudgel and shouted at her,

"You're a damned bitch, using your wealth to buy the Bull Demon King. You could only get him to marry you for your money. You ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself instead of being so insulting."

At this all of her souls sent flying, and she fled trembling with terror, stumbling and tripping over her shoes, while the Great Sage ran after her, shouting and roaring. Once they were out from under the shade of the pines they were at the entrance to the Cloud–touching Cave. She ran inside and the doors slammed shut behind her.

Only then did Monkey put his cudgel away and take a good look: A thick forest,

Sheer precipices,

Luxuriance of creepers,

Fragrance of orchids.

The spring washed over jade and through bamboo;

Grotesque and cunning rocks held precious stones.

The distant peaks were wreathed in mists;

Sun and moon lit up the cloudy crags.

Dragons howled, tigers roared,

Cranes called and warblers sang.

Fresh and lovely was its elegant peace,

And the scenery was radiant with precious flowers.

It was a match for Tiantai's magic caves,

And finer than the Peng and Ying islands in the sea.

We will say nothing of how Brother Monkey admired the view but tell how the young woman, dripping with sweat after running and her heart beating wildly from terror, went straight to the study where the Bull Demon King was quietly perusing a book on cinnabar alchemy. She threw herself into his arms feeling thoroughly put out, scratched and tugged at his face and ears, and howled aloud.

Chapter 60

"Don't upset yourself so, my lovely," said the Bull Demon King, all smiles. "What do you want to tell me?"

She then began to prance and jump about in her fury as she said abusively, "You're killing me, damned monster."

"What makes you say that?" he asked, all smiles.

"I brought you here to look after me and protect me because I'd lost my parents and people who'd been around all said that you were a tough guy," she said. "But you're just another henpecked hack."

The Bull Demon King took her in his arms and said, "How've I done you wrong, my lovely? Take your time and tell me about it. I'll make it up to you."

"I was taking a stroll among the flowers outside the cave just now picking orchids," she said, "When a monk with a face like a thunder god rushed up to me and started bowing. I was so scared I couldn't move. When I calmed down enough to ask him who he was he said he'd been sent by that Princess Iron Fan with an invitation for you. I was so angry I had something to say about that, and he started abusing me and chased me with his cudgel. He'd have just about killed me with it if I hadn't run so fast. So you see, bringing you here was a disaster. It's killing me." At this the Bull Demon King apologized to her very earnestly. It took a long time and many tender attentions from his before she finally calmed down.

"I tell you the truth, my lovely," the demon king said forcefully. "The Plantain Cave may be rather out of the way, but it's a place of purity and elegance. That wife of mine has had the highest moral principles since childhood, and she's also an immortal who has attained the Way. She runs her household very strictly. There's not even a page there. She couldn't possibly have sent a monk with a face like a thunder god. I wonder what evil fiend he is. He must have used her name to come and see me. I'm going out to have a look."

The splendid demon king strode out of the study and into the hall to put on his armor and take his iron cudgel.

"Who are you, and why are you behaving so outrageously?" he shouted as he went out through the doors.

Monkey, who was watching from one side, saw that he now looked quite different from the way he had five hundred years earlier.

His wrought iron helmet shone like water or silver;

His golden armor was trimmed with silks and brocades.

The toes of his deerskin boots turned up; their soles were white.

The silken belt at his waist included three lion's tails.

His eyes were as bright as mirrors,

His brows as elegant as red rainbows,

His mouth like a bowl of blood,

His teeth a row of copper plates.

At his resounding roar the mountain gods took fright;

Evil ghosts were overawed by his majestic power.

His fame was known throughout the seas for raising chaos;

He was the Strongarm Demon King here in the West.

The Great Sage then tidied his clothes, stepped forward, chanted a deep "re—e—er" of respect, and asked, "Can you still recognize me, eldest brother?"

"Are you Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven?" the Bull Demon King replied, returning his bow.

"Yes, yes," said Monkey. "It's such a long time since last we met. I only got here to see you because I asked a woman some questions just now. I must congratulate you on how well everything is growing."

"Cut that out," the Bull Demon King shouted back. "I heard about you making havoc in Heaven and being crushed under the Five Elements Mountain by the Lord Buddha. Then you were released from your

heavenly punishment to protect the Tang Priest on his way to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures in the Western Heaven. Why did you have to destroy my son, the Sage Boy Bullcalf? I'm very angry with you. Why are you here looking for me?"

"Please don't misjudge me, brother," said the Great Sage with another bow. "Your good son captured my master and was going to eat him. I was no match for him. Luckily the Bodhisattva Guanyin rescued my master and converted your boy. He's now the page Sudhana. He's even taller than you. He lives in a temple of great bliss and enjoys eternal ease. There's nothing wrong with any of that, so why be angry with me?"

"Smooth－tongued macaque," retorted the Bull Demon King. "Even if you can talk your way out of having ruined my son, what do you mean by upsetting my beloved concubine and chasing her up to my doors?"

"I made a polite inquiry of the lady because I could not find you," Monkey replied. "I never realized she was your second wife, so when she was rude to me I acted rough. Please forgive me."

"Very well then," the Bull Demon King said. "I'll let you off this time for the sake of our old friendship."

"I'm very grateful indeed for your immense kindness," the Great Sage replied. "But there is one thing I'd like to trouble you with. I hope you'll be able to help me out."

"You macaque," the Bull Demon King shouted at him, "you think you can get away with anything! I spare your life, but instead of making yourself scarce you have to keep pestering me. What do you mean by helping out?"

"Let me be honest with you," the Great Sage replied. "I'm stuck at the Fiery Mountains on my journey escorting the Tang Priest, and we're not getting anywhere. The local people told me that your good lady Raksasi has a plantain fan. I tried to borrow it. I went to visit my sister－in－law, but she refused to lend it me, which is why I've come to see you. I beg you, brother, in the greatness of your heart to come with me to sister－in－law's place and borrow the fan for me so that I can blow out the fires and get my master across the mountains. Then I'll return it right away."

At this the Bull Demon King's heart blazed with wrath. "You told me you knew how to behave," he said, noisily gnashing his teeth of steel. "I suppose all this was not just to borrow the fan. I'm certain my wife has Chapter 60

refused to lend it you because you've mistreated her. So that's why you came to see me. On top of that you send my beloved concubine fleeing in terror. As the saying goes,

'Don't push around

Your best friend's wife,

Don't try to destroy

The joy of his life.'

You've been pushing my wife around and trying to destroy the concubine who's the joy of my life. It's an outrage. Take this!"

"If you want to hit me, brother, I'm not afraid," said Monkey. "All I want is the treasure. I beg you to lend it me."

"If you can last out three rounds with me," the Bull Demon King said, "I'll make my wife lend it to you. And if you can't I'll kill you and have my revenge."

"Good idea, brother," Monkey replied. "I've been so lazy. I haven't been to see you for ages, and I don't know how your fighting powers now compare with the old days. Let's have a match with our cudgels." The Bull Demon King was in no mood for further argument, and he hit at Monkey's head with his mace. Monkey hit back with his gold–banded cudgel. It was a splendid fight:

The gold–banded cudgel,

The rough iron mace,

Are no longer friends.

One said, "You destroyed my son, you macaque."

The other, "Don't be angry: he has found the Way."

"How could you be so stupid as to come to my door?"

"I am here to visit you with a special purpose."

One wanted the fan to protect the Tang Priest;

The other was too mean to lend the plantain leaf.

Friendship was lost in the exchange of words;

In anger neither had any sense of brotherhood.

The Bull Demon King's mace moved like a dragon;

The Great Sage's cudgel sent gods and demons fleeing.

First they fought in front of the mountain,

Then they both rose on auspicious clouds.

They showed their great powers up in mid–air,

Doing wonderful movements in multi–coloured light.

The clash of their cudgels rocked the gates of Heaven;

They were too evenly matched for either to win.

The Great Sage and the Bull Demon King fought over a hundred rounds without either emerging as the victor.

Just as they were becoming locked in their struggle a voice called from the peak, "King Bull, my king sends his respects and invites you to honour him with your presence at a banquet."

At this the Bull Demon King blocked the gold–banded cudgel with his iron mace and called out, "You stay here, macaque. I'm going to a friend's house for a meal. I'll be back." With that he landed his cloud and went straight back into the cave.

"My lovely," he said to Princess Jade, "the man you saw with a face like a thunder god is the macaque Sun Wukong. A bout with my mace has sent him packing: he won't be back. Stop worrying and enjoy yourself. I'm going to a Mend's place for some drinks." He then took off his helmet and armor, donned a duck–green jacket of cut velvet, went outside and mounted his water–averting golden–eyed beast. Telling his underlings to look after the palace he headed Northwest in

clouds and mist.

While the Great Sage watched all this from the peak he thought, "I wonder who the friend is and where he's gone for his banquet. I'll follow him." Splendid Monkey then shook himself and turned into a clear breeze to follow him. He soon reached a mountain, but the Bull Demon King was nowhere to be seen. The Great Sage turned back into himself and started to search the mountain. He found a deep pool of pure water beside which was inscribed in large letters on a tablet of stone

RAGGED ROCK MOUNTAIN

GREEN WAVE POOL

"Old Bull must have gone into the water," Monkey thought, "and underwater spirits are lesser dragons, dragon or fish spirits, or else turtle, tortoise or terrapin spirits. I'd better go down and have a look."

Chapter 60

Making a hand－spell and saying the magic words the splendid Great Sage shook himself, turned into a medium－sized crab weighing thirty －six pounds, jumped into the water with a splash, and went straight down to the bottom of the pool. He saw an ornamental arch of delicate tracery to which was tethered a water－averting golden －eyed beast. On the other side of the arch there was no more water. Monkey crawled through and took a careful look. From one side he heard music, and this is what he saw: Cowry gateways to a palace red,

Like nothing else in the world.

The roof tiles were of yellow gold,

The door pivots of whitest jade.

The screens were of tortoise－shell,

The balustrades of coral and of pearl.

Auspicious clouds glowed all around the throne,

From the sky above right down to the ground.

This was not the palace of Heaven or the sea,

Although it more than rivaled an island paradise.

A banquet for host and guests was set in the lofty hall,

Where all the official wore their hats with pearls.

Jade girls were told to bring ivory bowls,

Exquisite beauties to play fine music.

The great whale sang,

Giant crabs danced,

Turtles played pipes and drums,

While pearls shone over the goblets and boaras.

Birdlike script adorned the turquoise screens,

While shrimp—whisker curtains hung along the corridors.

From the eight notes mingled came wonderful music

Whose tones rose up to the clouds above.

Chapter 60

833

Journey to the West

Green—headed singsong girls stroked zithers of jasper

While red—eyed dragonflies played jade flutes.

Mandarin fish carried dried venison in on their heads,

While dragon girls had the wings of golden pheasants in their hair.

What they ate were

The rarest delicacies of the heavenly kitchen;

What they drank were

The finest vintages of the purple palace.

The Bull Demon King was sitting in the seat of honour with three or four lesser dragon spirits on either side.

Facing him was an ancient dragon, surrounded by dragon sons, dragon grandsons, dragon wives and dragon daughters. Just as they were feasting and drinking the Great Sage Sun marched straight in, to be spotted by the ancient dragon, who ordered, "Arrest that vagrant crab." The dragon sons and grandsons fell upon him and seized him.

"Spare me, spare me," said Monkey, suddenly reverting to human speech.

"Where are you from, crab vagrant?" the ancient dragon asked. "How dare you come into my hall and behave in this disgraceful way in front of my distinguished guests? Tell me this moment if you want to be spared the death penalty." The splendid Great Sage then made up a pack of lies to tell him:

"Ever since coming to live in the lake

I've had to make my home in cliffs and caves.

Over the years I've learned to stretch myself out

So now I am known as the Sideways Man – at – arms.

Dragging my way through weeds and through mud,

I have never been taught correct social behavior.

If in my ignorance I have caused offence I beg

Your Majesty to show me mercy."

Chapter 60

When the spirits at the banquet heard this they all bowed to the ancient dragon and said, "This is the first time that the Sideways Man – at – arms has come to your palace of jasper, and he does not understand royal etiquette.

We beg Your Excellency to spare him."

The ancient dragon thanked the spirits and ordered, "Release the wretch. Put a beating on record against his name, and have him wait outside." The Great Sage acknowledged his kindness then fled for his life till he reached the archway outside.

"That Bull Demon King is drinking for all he's worth in there," he thought. "I'm not going to wait till the feast breaks up. And even if I did he still wouldn't lend me the fan. I'd do better to steal his golden-eyed beast and turn myself into a Bull Demon King. Then I can trick Raksasi into lending me the fan and I'll be able to escort my master across the mountains. That'll be best."

The splendid Great Sage then reverted to his original form, untied the golden-eyed beast, leapt into the carved saddle, and rode straight up from the bottom of the water. Once out of the pool he made himself look like the Bull Demon King. Whipping on the beast he set his cloud moving and was soon at the mouth of the Plantain Cave in Mount Turquoise Cloud.

"Open up!" he shouted, and at the sound of his voice the two servant girls inside the gates opened them for him.

Taking him for the Bull Demon King they went in to report, "Madam, His Majesty's come home." At the news Raksasi quickly neatened her hair and hurried out on her little lotus feet to meet him. Climbing out of the saddle the Great Sage led the golden-eyed beast inside. He was bold enough to try to deceive the beauty, whose mortal eyes failed to see who he really was as she led him inside, hand in hand. The maids were told to prepare places and bring tea, and as the master was back the whole household tried its hardest.

The Great Sage and Raksasi were soon talking. "My good lady," said the false Bull Demon King, "it's been a long time."

"I hope that everything has gone well for Your Majesty," Raksasi replied, going on to ask, "What wind brings you back to your abandoned wife now that you have married your new darling?"

"There's no question of having abandoned you," the Great Sage replied with a smile. "It's just that I've been away a long time since Princess Jade invited me to her place. I'm kept very busy with domestic matters to deal with and friends to attend to. I hear that so-and-so Sun Wukong is very near the Fiery Mountains with the Tang Priest, and I'm worried that he might come and ask you to lend him the fan. I

can't forgive him for destroying our son, I want my revenge. If he turns up, just send someone to tell me. When I get him we can cut his body up into ten thousand pieces as revenge for what we have suffered."

"You Majesty," replied Raksasi, in tears at what he had just said, "as the saying goes, 'A man with no woman is risking his wealth; a woman with no husband is risking her health.' That macaque practically killed me."

At this the Great Sage pretended to fly into a terrible rage. "When did that bloody monkey go?" he swore.

"He hasn't gone yet," Raksasi replied. "He was here yesterday to borrow the fan, and as he'd destroyed our boy I put my armor on and went out to cut him to bits with my swords. But he endured the pain, called me his sister–in–law, and said that you and he were once sworn brothers."

"He was my seventh sworn brother five hundred years ago," the Great Sage replied.

"He said not a word when I swore at him," Raksasi continued, "and didn't strike back when I cut him. Finally I blew him away with the fan. Goodness only knows where he got some wind–fixing magic from, but this morning he was back shouting outside the door again, and the fan wouldn't move him no matter how hard I waved it. When I swung my swords around and went for him with them he wasn't being polite any more. I was so scared of the force of his cudgel I came back in here and had the doors tightly shut. Somehow or other he managed to get right into my belly and it practically killed me. I had to call him brother–in–law and lend him the fan before he'd go."

The Great Sage put on a great show of beating his chest and saying, "How terrible, how terrible. You did wrong, wife. You should never have given that treasure to the macaque."

"Don't be angry, Your Majesty," Raksasi replied. "I lent him a false fan and tricked him into going away."

"Where's the real one?" the Great Sage asked.

"Don't worry," she replied, "don't worry. It's safely put away." She then told the serving girls to lay on wine and a feast to welcome him back. "Your Majesty," she then said, offering him a goblet of wine, "please don't forget the wife of your youth in the joy of your new marriage. Won't you drink this cup of wine from home?"

The Great Sage had no choice but to accept the goblet and smile as he raised it.

"You drink first, wife," he said, "I've left you looking after the home by yourself, good lady, for too long, while I've been busy with my other property. Let this be a gesture of my gratitude."

Raksasi took the goblet back, lifted it again, and handed it to the king with the words, "As the old saying goes: The wife is the equal, but the husband is the father who supports her. You don't need to thank me." It was only after more such politeness that the two of them sat down and began drinking. Not wanting to break his vow to avoid meat, the Great Sage only ate some fruit while he talked to her.

After they had each had several cups Raksasi was feeling a little drunk and rather sexy. She started to press herself against the Great Sage, stroking and pinching him. Taking him by the hand, she whispered tender words to him; leaning her shoulder against him, she spoke quietly and submissively. They shared the same cup of wine, drinking a mouthful each at a time, and she fed him fruit. The Great Sage pretended to go along with this and smile. He had no choice but to lean against her. Indeed: The hook to catch poetry,

The broom to sweep away sorrow,

The remover of all difficulties is wine.

The man, though virtuous, unbuttoned his lapel;

The woman forgot herself and began to laugh.

Her face had the complexion of a peach,

Her body swayed like a willow sapling.

Many a word came babbling from her mouth

As she pinched and nipped in her desire.

Sometimes she tugged at her hair,

Or waved her delicate fingers.

She often raised a foot

And twitched the sleeves of her clothes.

Her powdered neck sunk lower

And her fine waist started to wiggle.

She never stopped talking for a moment

As she opened gold buttons to half show her breasts.

In her cups she was like a landslide of jade,

And as she rubbed her bleary eyes she did not look at her best.

Watching her get drunk the Great Sage had kept his wits about him, and he tried to lead her on by saying,

"Where have you put the real fan, wife? You must watch it very carefully all the time. I'm worried that Sun the Novice will trick it out of you with some of his many transformations." At this Raksasi tittered, spat it out of her mouth, and handed it to the Great Sage. It was only the size of an apricot leaf.

"Here's the treasure," she said.

The Great Sage took it but could not believe that it really was. "How could a tiny little thing like this blow a fire out?" he wondered. "It must be another fake."

Seeing him looking at the treasure so deep in thought, Raksasi could not restrain herself from rubbing her powdered face against Monkey's and saying, "Put the treasure away and have another drink, darling. What are you looking so worried about?"

The Great Sage took the chance to slip in the question, "How could a

little thing like this blow out 250 miles of fire?" She was now drunk enough to have no inhibitions about speaking the truth, so she told him how it was done: "Your Majesty, I expect you've been overdoing your pleasures day and night these last two years since you left me. That Princess Jade must have addled your brains if you can't even remember about your own treasure. You just have to pinch the seventh red silk thread with the thumb of your left hand and say,

'Huixuhexixichuihu.' Then it'll grow twelve feet long. It can do as many changes as you like. It could blow 250,000 miles of flame out with a single wave."

The Great Sage committed all this very carefully to memory, put the fan in his mouth, rubbed his face and turned back into himself. "Raksasi!" he yelled at the top of his voice. "Have a careful look: I'm your brother—in—law. What a disgusting way you've been carrying on in with me, and for what a long time too.

You're shameless, quite shameless."

Chapter 60

In her horror at realizing it was Sun Wukong she pushed the dining table over and fell into the dust, overcome with shame and screaming. "I'm so upset I could die, I could die."

Not caring whether she was dead or alive, the Great Sage broke free and rushed straight out of the Plantain Cave. He was indeed not lusting after that female beauty, and glad to turn away with a smiling face. He sprang on his auspicious cloud that took him up to the top of the mountain, spat the fan out of his mouth, and tried the magic out. Pinching the seventh red tassel with the thumb of his left hand, he said

"Huixuhexixichuihu," and indeed it grew to be twelve feet long. On close examination he found it quite different from the false one he had borrowed before. It glittered with auspicious light and was surrounded by lucky vapors. Thirty—six threads of red silk formed a trellis pattern inside and out. But Brother Monkey had only asked how to make it grow and had not found out the spell for shrinking it. So he had to shoulder it as he went back by the way he had come.

When the Bull Demon King's feast with all the spirits at the bottom of the Green Wave Pool ended he went outside to find that the water – averting golden – eyed beast was missing. The ancient dragon king called the spirits together to ask them, "Which of you untied and stole the Bull Demon King's golden – eyed beast?" The spirits all knelt down and replied, "We wouldn't dare steal it. We were all waiting, singing or playing at the banquet. None of us was out here."

"I am sure that none of you palace musicians would have dared to take it," the ancient dragon said. "Have any strangers been here?"

"A crab spirit was here not long ago during the banquet, and he was a stranger."

At this the Bull King suddenly realized what had happened. "Say no more," he exclaimed. "When you sent your messenger with the invitation this morning there was a Sun Wukong there who'd come to ask to borrow my plantain fan as he couldn't get the Tang Priest he's escorting to fetch the scriptures across the Fiery Mountains. I refused. I was in the middle of a fight with him that neither of us was winning when I shook him off and came straight here to the banquet. That monkey's extremely quick and adaptable. I'm sure that the crab spirit was him here in disguise to do a bit of spying. He's stolen my beast to go and trick the plantain fan out of my wife." This news made all the spirits shake with fright.

"Do you mean the Sun Wukong who made havoc in Heaven?" they asked.

"Yes," the Bull Demon King replied. "If any of you gentlemen have any trouble on the road West keep your distance from him whatever you do."

"But if all that's true, what about Your Majesty's steed?" the ancient dragon asked.

"No problem," the Bull Demon King replied with a smile. "You gentlemen may all go home now while I go after him."

With that he parted his way through the waters, sprang up from the bottom of the pool and rode a yellow cloud straight to the Plantain Cave on Mount Turquoise Cloud, where he heard Raksasi stamping her feet, beating her breast, howling and moaning. He pushed the doors open to see the water – averting golden – eyed beast tethered by them.

"Where did Sun Wukong go, wife?" the Bull Demon King said.

Chapter 60

838

Journey to the West

Seeing that the Bull Demon King was back, the serving girls all knelt down and said, "Are you home, Your Majesty?"

Raksasi grabbed hold of him, banged her head against his, and said abusively, "Damn and blast you, you careless fool. Why ever did you let that macaque steal the golden-eyed beast and turn himself into your double to come here and trick me?"

"Which way did the macaque go?" the Bull Demon King asked, grinding his teeth in fury. Beating her breast Raksasi continued to pour out abuse: "The damn monkey tricked me out of my treasure, turned back into himself, and went. I'm so angry I could die."

"Do look after yourself, wife," the Bull Demon King said, "and don't be so upset. When I've caught the macaque and taken the treasure off him I'll skin him, grind his bones to powder, and bring you his heart and liver. That'll make you feel better." He then called for weapons.

"Your Majesty's weapons aren't here," the serving girls replied.

"Then bring your mistress' weapons," the Bull Demon King replied. The servants brought her pair of blue-tipped swords, and the Bull Demon King took off the duck-green velvet jacket he had worn to the banquet and tied the little waistcoat he wore next to his skin more tightly. He then strode out of the Plantain Cave, a sword in each hand, and headed straight for the Fiery Mountains in pursuit of Monkey. It was a case of

The man who forgot a kindness

Tricking a doting wife;

The fiery-tempered old demon

Meeting a mendicant monk.

If you don't know whether this journey was ill-fated or not, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 61

Zhu Bajie Helps to Defeat a Demon King

Monkey's Third Attempt to Borrow the Fan

The story tells how the Bull Demon King caught up with the Great Sage Sun and saw him looking very cheerful as he went along with the plantain fan over his shoulder. "So the macaque has also tricked the art of using the fan out of her," the demon king thought. "If I ask him for it back to his face he's bound to refuse, and if he fans me with it and sends me sixty thousand miles away that would be just what he wants. Now I know that the Tang Priest is sitting waiting by the main road. When I was an evil spirit in the old days I used to know his second disciple the Pig Spirit. I think I'll turn myself into a double of the Pig Spirit and play a trick back on him. That macaque will no doubt be so pleased with himself that he won't really be on his guard."

The splendid demon king could also do seventy – two transformations and his martial skills were on a par with those of the Great Sage: it was just that he was rather more clumsily built, was less quick and penetrating, and not so adaptable.

First he hid the swords then he said the words of the spell, turned himself into the exact likeness of Pig, went down, and met Monkey face to face. "I'm here, brother," he called.

The Great Sage was indeed delighted. As the ancient saying goes, a cat that's won a fight is more pleased with himself than a tiger. Monkey was so confident of his powers that he did not bother to investigate why the new arrival was here, but seeing that he looked like Pig, called out, "Where are you going brother?"

The Bull Demon King made up an answer on the spot: "You'd been away for so long that the master wondered if the Bull Demon King's magic powers were too much for you and you couldn't get the treasure. So he sent me to meet you."

"There was no need to worry," said Monkey. "I've already got it."

"How did you manage that?" the Bull Demon King asked.

"Old Bull and I fought over a hundred rounds without either of us getting the upper hand till he broke off the fight and went to the bottom of the Green Wave Pool in Ragged Rock Mountain for a banquet with a whole lot of lesser dragons and dragons. I tailed – him there, turned into a crab, stole the water – averting golden – eyed beast, made myself look like him, and went to the Plantain Cave to trick Raksasi, She as good as married me on the spot and I conned it out of her."

"You had to go to a lot of trouble, brother," the Bull Demon King replied. "Can I hold the fan?" Not realizing that this Pig was an impostor, or even considering the possibility, the Great Sage Sun handed him the fan.

Now the Bull Demon King knew the secret of making the fan shrink or grow, and as soon as he had the fan in his hands he made a spell with them that nobody could see, shrunk it back to the size of an apricot leaf, and reverted to his true form. "Bloody macaque," he swore, "do you know who I am now?" As soon as he saw this Monkey regretted making so terrible a mistake.

With a cry of anguish he stamped his feet and yelled, "Aagh! After all these years I've been hunting wild geese a gosling has pecked out my eye!" He was now leaping around in a thunderous fury, and he took a crack at the Bull Demon King's head with his iron cudgel. The demon king then fanned him with the fan, not realizing that the Great Sage had inadvertently swallowed the wind – fixing pill he had in his mouth when he turned himself into a tiny insect to go into Raksasi's stomach. This had made all his entrails, his skin and his bones so solid and firm that no matter how hard the Bull Demon King fanned he could not move him. This alarmed the Bull Demon King, who put the treasure in his mouth and fought back, swinging a sword in each hand. The two of them fought a splendid battle up in mid – air:

The Great Sage Equaling Heaven,

The Bull Demon King of evil,

All for the sake of a plantain – leaf fan.

When they met each showed his powers;

The careless Great Sage got the fan by a trick,

But allowed the Bull King to take it back.

One mercilessly raised the golden cudgel,

The other wielded with skill his blue – tipped swords.

The mighty Great Sage belched out coloured mists

While the evil Bull King breathed brilliant lights.

Well matched in courage,

Both of them wicked,

They gnashed and ground their teeth in terrible wrath.

Heaven and earth were darkened by the dust they kicked up;

Gods and ghosts alike hid from the flying stones.

"How dare you try to turn a trick against me!"

"I'll get you for what my wife promised you!"

Coarse was their language and fierce were their tempers.

"For tricking my wife you deserve to die."

"When I sue you the sentence will surely be death."

The cunning Great Sage Equaling Heaven,

The murderous Strongarm Demon King:

Both of them only wanting to fight,

Neither of them willing to pause and discuss.

Equal the effort of swords and of cudgel;

Had either relaxed he'd have gone straight to Hell.

The story now tells not of those two locked in their struggle but of the Tang Priest sitting by the road and finding the heat unbearable. He was also very anxious and thirsty.

"May I ask you," he said to the local deity, "what that Bull Demon King's powers are like?"

"He has very great magic," the local god replied, "and his dharma powers are unlimited. He and the Great Sage Sun are well matched."

"Wukong is a very good traveler," Sanzang replied. "He can normally go six or seven hundred miles and back in an instant. Why has he been away all day? I'm sure he must be fighting the Bull Demon King." With that he called for Pig and Friar Sand and asked, "Which of you will go to meet your elder brother? If he is up against an enemy you will have to help him in the fight, get the fan, and come back. I am very impatient to cross these mountains and continue along our way."

"It's getting late," Pig replied, "and I'd like to go to meet him. The only thing is that I don't know the way to Mount Thunder Piled."

"But I do," the local god said. "Tell the Curtain–lifting General to keep your master company while you and I go there."

Sanzang was delighted. "I am most grateful to you for going to such trouble," he said, "and I shall thank you again when you have succeeded."

Pig then summoned up his spirits, tightened the belt round his black brocade tunic, and took his rake in his hands as he rose up on his cloud with the local god and headed due East. As they were going along they heard great shouts and were buffeted by strong winds. Stopping his cloud for a good look he saw that it was all caused by Monkey and the Bull Demon King fighting.

"Why don't you join in, Marshal Tian Peng?" the local deity asked. "What are you waiting for?"

At that the idiot brandished his rake and said with a great shout, "Brother, I'm coming."

"Idiot," said Monkey bitterly, "you've ruined things for me."

"But the master told me to come to meet you," Pig protested. "He asked the local god to guide me as I don't know the way. That's why I'm a bit late. How can you say I've ruined things for you?"

"I'm not angry with you for being late," Monkey replied. "It's this damned bull who's a thorough disgrace. I'd got the fan off Raksasi, but he turned himself into your double and came to meet me. I was so pleased to see you that I passed him the fan. He turned back into himself and we've been fighting it out ever since. That's why I said you'd ruined things for me."

This news put Pig into a flaming temper. Raising his rake he shouted abuse to the Bull Demon King's face:

"I'll get you, you pox—ridden bag of blood! I'll get you for pretending to be me, your own ancestor, to trick my brother and stir up trouble between us."

Watch as he starts lashing out wildly with the rake. The Bull Demon King, who had been fighting Monkey all day, was tiring, and he also realized that he would never be able to withstand the onslaught of Pig's rake, so he fled in defeat. But his way was blocked by a force of spirit soldiers led by the local god of the Fiery Mountains.

"Wait, Strongarm King," the local deity said. "All the gods and heavens are protecting Tang Sanzang on his journey West to fetch the scriptures. The Three Worlds all know about him, and the Ten Directions are supporting him. Please lend him your plantain fan to blow out the flames so that he can cross the mountains without danger or disaster. Otherwise Heaven will hold you criminally responsible and you're bound to be executed."

Chapter 61

842

Journey to the West

"You haven't looked into the rights and wrongs of this at all," King Demon Bull replied. "That damned ape has done one evil thing after another: he's stolen my son, bullied my concubine, and defrauded my wife. I wish I could swallow him whole and turn him into shit to feed to the dogs. I'll never lend him my treasure."

Before the words were all out of his mouth Pig had caught up with him and was saying abusively, "I'll get you, you poxy bull. The fan or your life!" The Bull Demon King had to turn round to fight Pig off with his swords while the Great Sage Monkey wielded his cudgel to help him. It was a fine fight they had there: A boar turned spirit,

A bull become monster.

A monkey who had robbed Heaven and found the Way.

Dharma – nature can always overcome what has been created;

Earth must be used to combine with the prime cause.

Pointed and sharp were the nine teeth of the rake;

Flexible and keen were the two sword blades.

The movements of the iron cudgel dominated the fray;

The local god formed the cinnabar head.

The three of them struggled to overcome,

Each of them scheming to give play to his powers.

Metal money is best at making the bull draw the plough;

If the boar goes in the oven, wood is finished.

Unless the heart is in it the Way cannot be completed;

To keep the spirit controlled the monkey must be tied up.

Amid wild shouts and desperate pleas

The three types of weapon whistled through the air.

There was no kindness in the blows of rake and sword;

The gold – banded cudgel rose for good reason.

Their fight put out the stars and dimmed the moon;

The sky was filled with a cold, dark dreary fog.

Chapter 61

The demon king fought hard and courageously for mastery, falling back all the while. When the dawn came after a whole night of battle there was still no victor, and in front of them now was the entrance to the Cloud–touching Cave on Mount Thunder Piled. The ear–splitting noise that the three of them, the local god and the spirit soldiers were making alarmed Princess Jade, who sent her serving girls to see who was causing the din.

The little demons on the doors came in to report, "It's our master. He's fighting the man with a face like a thunder god, another monk with a long snout and big ears, and the local god of the Fiery Mountains and his men." The moment Princess Jade heard this she ordered the senior and junior officers of the guard to take their swords and spears and help their lord.

"Good to see you," said the Bull Demon King with delight, "good to see you." All the demons rushed wildly into the attack. It was more than Pig could cope with and he fled in defeat, trailing his rake behind him. The Great Sage sprang aloft out of the multiple encirclement on a somersault cloud; the spirit soldiers broke and ran. Old Bull led his host of demons back to the cave in victory and the doors were shut tightly behind them.

"He's tough, damn him," said Monkey. "He started fighting me at about four yesterday afternoon and we were nowhere near a result when you two came along to help last night. He fought for half a day and a whole night without showing any sign of tiring. And that bunch of little devils who came out just now were a rough lot too. Now he's shut the doors of his cave and won't come out. What are we to do?"

"It was about ten yesterday morning when you left the master, brother," Pig said, "so why was it four in the afternoon when you started fighting him? What were you doing for the six hours in between?"

"I reached this mountain soon after I left you," Monkey replied, "and saw a woman. When I questioned her she turned out to be his favorite concubine Princess Jade. I gave her a bit of a fright with my cudgel, so she fled into the cave and sent her Bull Demon King out. He and I swapped a few insults then started fighting.

We'd been at it for a couple of hours when someone came to invite

him to a banquet. I tailed him to the bottom of the Green Wave Pool on Ragged Rock Mountain and turned into a crab to do a little spying. Then I stole his water – averting golden – eyed beast and changed myself into the Bull Demon King's double to go back to the Plantain Cave on Mount Turquoise Cloud, where I conned Raksasi into giving me the fan. I went outside to try the magic spell out on the fan and made it grow, but I didn't know how to make it shrink again.

As I was walking along with it on my shoulder he turned himself into your spitting image and tricked it back off me again. That's how I wasted six hours."

"As the saying goes," Pig replied, "it's just like a boatful of beancurd sinking: it came out of the wet and it disappeared into the wet. Easy come, easy go, But how are we going to take our master across the mountains if we're having so hard a time getting the fan? We'll just have to go back and make a bloody detour."

"Don't get impatient, Great Sage," the local god said, "and don't try to be lazy, Marshal Tian Peng. If you make a detour that will mean leaving the straight and narrow: you'll never cultivate your conduct that way. As the old saying goes, 'In walking never take a short cut.' You mustn't talk about detours. Your master is waiting by the main road, desperate for your success."

"Yes, yes," said Monkey, his resolve stiffened, "don't talk nonsense, idiot. The local deity is right. As for that Bull Demon King, we'll have to"

Chapter 61

Straggle for mastery,

Use our powers,

Until we can make the whole earth change.

Since coming to the West he has never met a rival:

The Bull King was originally the mind – ape transformed.

Only today do the sources flow:

We must hold out till we borrow the fan.

Put out the flames in the cool of the dawn,

Smash through obstinate emptiness to visit the Buddha.

When all is fulfilled we will rise to heavenly bliss,

And all go to the assembly under the Dragon – flower Tree."

These words braced Pig's spirits too, and eagerly he said,

"Yes, yes, yes!

Go, go, go!

Never mind what the Bull King's powers are,

Wood grows in the nor'nor'west and is matched with a pig;

The bull – calf will be led back to the earth.

Metal was born in West sou'west and was an ape,

Without any conflict or conquest and full of peace.

We must use the plantain leaf as if it were water

To put out the flames and bring harmony.

Hard work by night and day with never a rest

Will lead us to success and the Ullambana feast."

Chapter 61

The two of them led the local deity and his spirit soldiers forward, then battered the doors of the Cloud – touching Cave to pieces with the rake and the cudgel. This so terrified the guard commanders that they rushed inside to report, "Your Majesty, Sun Wukong's brought his troops here and has smashed down our front doors."

The Bull Demon King was just then telling Princess Jade what had happened and feeling thoroughly fed up with Monkey. The news of

the front doors being smashed made him beside himself with fury, so he put his armor on immediately and went outside with his iron mace in his hands shouting abusively, "Damned macaque! You must think you're a very big shot indeed, coming here to play the hooligan and smash down my front door."

"Old skinflint," retorted Pig, going forward, "who do you think you are, trying to put other people in their place? Don't move! Take this!"

"Idiot!" the Bull Demon King replied. "Chaff – guzzler! You're not worth bothering with. Tell that monkey to come here."

"You don't know what's good for you, cud – chewer," called Monkey. "Yesterday you were still my sworn brother, but today we're enemies. Watch this carefully!" The Bull Demon King met their onslaught with spirit, and the ensuing fight was even finer than the one before. The three heroes were locked in a melee. What a battle!

Rake and iron cudgel showing their might,

Leading the spirit soldiers to attack the ancient beast.

The beast displayed his terrible strength when fighting alone, Reviving his powers that rivaled those of Heaven.

The rake hit hard,

The mace struck,

The iron cudgel showed its heroic powers.

The three weapons rang against each other,

Blocking and parrying, never giving way.

One said he was the champion,

Another claimed, "I am the best."

The earth soldiers who were watching could hardly tell them apart.

As wood and earth were locked in combat.

Chapter 61

"Why won't you lend us the plantain fan?"

"You had the effrontery to mistreat my wife,

To ruin my son and terrify my concubine.

I haven't punished you for all of that yet,

And now you harass us and beat down my doors."

"Be on your guard against the As – You – Will cudgel:

A touch of it will tear your skin open."

"Mind you avoid the teeth of my rake:

One blow, and nine wounds all gush blood."

The Bull Monster fearlessly gave play to his might,

Wielding his mace with skill and with cunning.

Their movements turned the rain clouds upside – down,

As each of them snorted out his mists and winds.

This was indeed a battle to the death,

As they fought it out together with hatred in their hearts.

Taking new stances,

Offering openings high and low,

They attacked and they parried with never a mistake.

The two brother disciples were united in their efforts;

The solitary mace showed its might alone.

They battled from dawn till eight in the morning

Till the Bull Demon had to abandon the fight.

With death in their hearts and no thought of survival the three of them fought another hundred or so rounds till Pig took advantage of

Monkey's miraculous powers to put all his brute strength into a rain of blows from his rake that were more than the Bull Demon King could withstand. He turned and fled defeated back to his cave, only to find the entrance blocked by the local god and his spirit troops.

Chapter 61

847

Journey to the West

"Where do you think you're going, Strongarm King?" the local god shouted. "We're here." As he could not get into his cave the Bull Demon King fled, only to be pursued by Pig and Monkey. In his panic the Bull Demon King tore off his helmet and armor, threw away his mace, shook himself, turned into a swan and flew away.

Monkey looked around and said with a grin, "Pig, Old Bull's gone."

The idiot had not the faintest idea of what had happened and neither had the local god as they looked all around and aimlessly searched Mount Thunder Piled. "Isn't that him flying up there?" said Monkey, pointing.

"It's a swan," Pig replied.

"Yes," said Monkey, "it's what Old Bull turned himself into."

"So what are we going to do about it?" the local god asked.

"You two charge in there, wipe all the demons out without quarter and tear down his den," Monkey replied.

"That will cut off his retreat while I go and match transformations with him." We shall say no more of Pig and the local god smashing their way into the cave as they had been instructed.

Putting away his gold–banded cudgel and saying the words of a spell while making the necessary hand movements, Monkey shook himself and turned into a vulture who soared up into the clouds with his wings beating noisily, then swooped down on the swan, seizing its neck and gouging at its eyes. Realizing that this was Sun Wukong transformed the Bull Demon King braced himself and turned into a golden eagle who gouged, back at the vulture. Then Monkey turned into a black phoenix to chase the eagle, only to be recognized by the Bull King, who turned into a white crane and flew off South with a

loud call. Monkey stopped, braced his feathers, and turned into a red phoenix, who called loudly too. At the sight of the phoenix, the king of all the birds whom no bird dared treat with disrespect, the white crane swooped down beside the precipice with a beat of his wings, shook himself, and turned into a river－deer grazing in a timid, stupid way at the foot of the cliff. Monkey spotted him, came swooping down too, and turned into a hungry tiger that came running after the river －deer, swishing his tail hungrily. The demon king had to move fast as he transformed himself into a huge leopard with spots like golden coins who turned to savage the hungry tiger.

Seeing this, Monkey faced the wind, shook himself, and turned into a golden－eyed lion with a voice like thunder, a brazen head and an iron brow. He spun round to devour the leopard, at which the Bull Demon King immediately became a giant bear that ran after the lion. Monkey then rolled himself up and became an elephant with tusks shaped like bamboo shoots, and a trunk like a python that he stretched out to wrap round the bear.

The Bull Demon King chuckled and switched back into his own original shape as a great white bull with a craggy head and flashing eyes. Each of his horns was like an iron pagoda, and his teeth were rows of sharp swords. He was about ten thousand feet long from head to tail and stood eight thousand feet high at the shoulder.

"What are you going to do to me now, damned macaque?" he shouted to Brother Monkey at the top of his voice; at which Monkey too reverted to his own form, pulled out his gold－banded cudgel, bowed forward and shouted "Grow!" He then grew to be a hundred thousand feet tall with a head like Mount Taishan, eyes like the sun and moon, a mouth like a pool of blood and teeth like doors. He raised his iron cudgel and struck at the Bull Demon King's head; and the Bull Demon King hardened his head and charged Monkey with his horns. This was a ridge－rocking, mountain－shaking, heaven－scaring, earth －frightening battle, and there is a poem to prove it that goes:

The Way grows by one foot, the demon by ten thousand;

The cunning mind－ape puts him down by force.

If the Fiery Mountains' flames are to be put out,

The precious fan must blow them cool.

The yellow–wife is determined to protect the primal ancient;

The mother of wood is set on wiping out the demons.

When the Five Elements are harmonized they return to the true achievement; Evil and dirt are refined away as they travel to the West.

The two of them gave such a great display of their magic powers as they fought on the mountain that they alarmed all the deities, the Gold–headed Protector, the Six Jias, the Six Dings and the Eighteen Guardians of the Faith, who were passing through the air, came to surround the demon king. He was not in the least afraid as he butted to East and West with his straight, shining, iron horns, and lashed to North and South with his strong and hairy tail. Sun Wukong stood up to him head on while all the other gods surrounded him till in his despair the Bull Demon King rolled on the ground, turned back into his usual form, and headed for the Plantain Cave. Monkey too put away his magical form and joined in the chase with all the gods, but once in the cave the demon king shut the doors fast. The gods then threw a watertight encirclement around Mount Turquoise Cloud. Just when they were all about to storm the doors they heard the shouts of Pig arriving with the local god and his spirit soldiers.

"How are things in the Cloud–touching Cave?" Monkey asked, greeting him.

"I finished off Old Bull's woman with one blow from my rake," grinned Pig, "and when I stripped her I found she was a jade–faced fox spirit. Her demons were all donkeys, mules, bulls, badgers, foxes, raccoon dogs, river–deer, goats, tigers, elk, deer and things like that. We killed the lot of them and burnt down all the buildings in the cave. The local god tells me he's got another woman who lives here, so we've come here to wipe her out too."

"You've done well, brother," said Monkey. "Congratulations. I tried competing with Old Bull in transformations, but I couldn't beat him. He turned into a simply enormous white bull, and I made myself as big as heaven and earth. We were just battling it out when all the gods came down and surrounded him. After a long time he turned back into himself and went into the cave."

"Is this Plantain Cave?" Pig asked.

"Yes yes," Monkey replied, "Raksasi's in here."

"Then why don't we storm the place and wipe the lot of them out to get the fan?" said Pig, his blood still up.

"Are we going to let the two of them live to be any older and wiser and love each other with tender passion?"

The splendid idiot then summoned up his strength to bring his rake down on the doors so hard that doors, rock – face and all collapsed with a mighty rumble. The serving girls rushed inside to report, "Your Majesty, Chapter 61

someone's smashed the doors in and we don't know who he is." The Bull Demon King himself had just run panting in and was still telling Raksasi about his fight with Monkey for the fan when he heard this report, which made him very angry indeed.

At once he spat out the fan and gave it to Raksasi, who took it in her hands and said tearfully, "Your Majesty, give the macaque the fan if he'll call his troops off."

"Wife," the Bull Demon King replied, "it may only be a little thing in itself, but I hate and loathe him. Wait here while I have it out with him again." Once more the demon put on his armor, chose another pair of swords, and went out to find Pig smashing the doors down with his rake. Without a word Old Bull raised his swords and cut at Pig's head. Pig parried with his rake and fell back a few paces till he was outside the doors, where Monkey swung his cudgel at the Bull Demon King's head. The Bull Monster then mounted a storm wind and sprang away from the cave to fight Monkey once more on Mount Turquoise Cloud. All the gods surrounded him, while the local god's soldiers joined in the fray from either side. It was a splendid fight: Mists obscured the world,

Fog shrouded heaven and earth.

A whistling evil wind sent sand and pebbles rolling;

Towering wrath had the ocean's waves breaking.

With a newly – sharpened pair of swords,

And a body encased in armor once more,

His hatred was deeper than the sea,

And loathing made his fury greater than ever.

In his pursuit of glory the Great Sage Equaling Heaven

No longer regarded the other as an old friend.

Pig was using his might to obtain the fan

While the gods and protectors tried to capture the Bull.

Neither of the Bull King's hands could rest

As he blocked to left and right with heavenly skill.

Birds folded their wings, unable to fly past;

Fish stopped leaping and sank to the bottom.

Ghosts wept, gods howled; the earth and sky were dark;

Dragons and tigers were terrified and the sun was dimmed.

The Bull Demon King fought over fifty rounds for all he was worth till he abandoned the field and fled North, unable to hold out any longer. He was soon blocked by the Vajrapani Bofa from the Hidden Demon Cave on Mount Wutai whose magical powers were very extensive. "Bull Monster," he shouted, "Where are you going?

I have been commanded by the Lord Sakyamuni Buddha to spread out heaven – and – earth nets and arrest you here."

As he spoke the Great Sage, Pig and all the gods caught up. In his desperation the demon king turned and fled South only to find his way blocked by the Vajrapani Shenzhi of the Cave of Cool Purity on Mount Emei, who shouted, "I am here on the Buddha's orders to take you."

The Bull Demon King was now so terrified and exhausted that he turned and fled East, only to be blocked by the Vairocana monk, the Vajrapani Dali of Mo'er Cave on Mount Sumeru, who shouted, "Where are you going, Old Bull? I am on a secret mission from the Tathagata to catch you."

The Bull Demon King withdrew in terror once more, this time to the West, where he came up against the imperishable king, the Vajrapani Yongzhu from the Golden Brightness Ridge on Mount Kunlun, shouting,

"Where are you going, damn you? I have been personally instructed by the venerable Buddha of the Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven to cut off your escape this way. Nobody will let you pass."

The Old Bull was now trembling with fear, but it was too late for regrets. On all sides he was surrounded by the Buddha's troops and heavenly generals. It really was as if he were caught in a high net from which there was no escape. In his despair he heard Monkey coming after him at the head of his forces, so he sprang on his cloud and went up.

At just that moment Heavenly King Li the Pagoda—carrier was encamped in the sky with Prince Nezha, the Fish—bellied Yaksa and the Mighty Miracle God.

"Not so fast," he shouted, "not so fast. I am here on the mandate of the Jade Emperor to exterminate you." In his extremity the Bull Demon King shook himself, turned back into the giant white bull, and tried to gore the Heavenly King with his iron horns, while the Heavenly King hacked at him with his sword. Soon Brother Monkey arrived.

"Great Sage," Prince Nezha shouted at the top of his voice, "I can't greet you properly as I'm in armor.

Yesterday my father and I went to see the Tathagata Buddha, who sent a note to the Jade Emperor. It said that the Tang Priest was held up by the Fiery Mountains and that you couldn't subdue the Bull Demon King, Great Sage. The Jade Emperor then ordered my father to bring his forces here to help."

"But this damned creature's magical powers are tremendous," Monkey replied, "and he's turned himself into this. What are we going to do about him?"

"Have no doubts," replied Nezha with a smile. "Watch me catch him."

The prince then shouted, "Change!" gave himself three heads and six arms, and took a flying leap upon the Bull Demon King's back. With one swing of his demon – beheading sword he had the bull's head off before he even realized he had done it. The Heavenly King threw down his sword and went to meet Monkey. But another head grew out from the Bull Demon King's throat, its mouth breathing black vapors and its eyes flashing golden light. Nezha cut again, but as the head fell a new one appeared. Nezha's sword cut a dozen Chapter 61

heads off and a dozen new heads immediately grew again. Nezha then hung his fire – wheel on the bull's horns, blew on the magic fire, and made it blaze so fiercely that the Bull Demon King bellowed in desperate pain, shaking his head and tail and trying for all he was worth to escape.

Just when he was about to do another transformation and get away his true image was fixed in Heavenly King Li's demon – revealing mirror. Now he could make no more changes and he had no way of escape.

He could only call out, "Spare my life! I wish to be converted to the Buddhist faith."

"If you value your life, hand the fan over at once," said Nezha. "My wife is looking after it," the Bull Demon King replied.

Hearing this reply, Nezha undid his demon – binding rope and slipped it round his neck, then took him by the nose, ran the rope through it, and led him along by hand. Monkey meanwhile gathered together the four vajrapanis, the Six Dings, the Six Jias, the Guardians of the Faith, Heavenly King Li, the Mighty Miracle God, Pig, the local god and the spirit soldiers to crowd around the white bull and lead him back to the entrance to the Plantain Cave.

"Wife," Old Bull called, "bring the fan out and save my life." As soon as she heard this Raksasi took off her jewelry and bright – coloured clothing, dressed her hair like a Taoist nun and put on a white silk habit like a Buddhist one.

She came out through the doors carrying the twelve – foot fan with both hands, and at the sight of the vajrapanis, the gods, the Heavenly King and Nezha she fell to her knees in terror, kowtowing in worship

and saying, "I beg you Bodhisattvas to spare my husband and me. I present the fan to my brother–in–law Monkey for him to win his glory with." Monkey went forward, took the fan, and rode back East by auspicious cloud with the others.

Sanzang and Friar Sand had been waiting a very long time, sometimes sitting and sometimes standing, for Monkey to come back. They were extremely anxious by the time the sky was suddenly filled with auspicious clouds and the earth was lit up by blessed light as all the gods came whistling through the air towards them.

"Wujing," said the venerable elder in terror, "whose divine soldiers are coming from over there?"

"Master," said Friar Sand, who could recognize them, "it's the four vajrapanis, the Golden–headed Protector, the Six Jias, the Six Dings, the Guardians of the Faith and all the other passing gods. The one leading the bull is Prince Nezha, and there's Heavenly King Li the Pagoda–carrier holding a mirror. My eldest brother is carrying the plantain fan, and that's second brother and the local god behind him. The others are all escort troops."

Hearing this, Sanzang put on his Vairocana mitre and his cassock then went with Friar Sand to welcome the gods and thank them with these words: "What merits do I, your disciple, have that I put all you holy ones to the trouble of coming down to earth?"

To this the four vajrapanis replied, "Congratulations, holy monk. The great task has now been achieved. We were sent to help you on the Buddha's orders. You must now continue your self–cultivation and not slacken for a moment." Sanzang replied amid kowtows that he accepted their commands.

The Great Sage Sun took the fan close to the Fiery Mountains, waved it as hard as he could, and put the flames out. Their glare disappeared. He waved the fan again and the rustle of a cool breeze could be heard; and at the third wave the sky was overcast with cloud and a fine rain began to fall. There is a poem that bears witness to this:

For hundreds of miles the mountains of fire

Lit heaven and earth with notorious flames.

When fire roasts the five passions the elixir cannot be made.

When flame burns the three passes the Way is not pure.

To borrow the plantain fan and bring down rain,

Heavenly gods had to help with their spiritual power.

When the bull is led to the Buddha it must stop being evil;

When water and fire are allied the nature is calm.

Having been relieved of his cares Sanzang stopped worrying. All the hosts then reverently thanked the vajrapanis, who all returned to their mountains, and the Six Dings and Six Jias went back into the sky to give their protection. The deities who had been passing by all went on their way; and the Heavenly King and Nezha led the bull back to hand him over to the Buddha. This left only the local mountain god waiting there with Raksasi under his guard.

"Why aren't you on your way, Raksasi?" Monkey asked. "What are you standing there waiting for?"

"I beg you in your mercy, Great Sage," she replied, "to give me back the fan."

"You've got a cheek, damned bitch," roared Pig. "We've spared your life and that should be enough for you.

What do you want the fan for? When we've crossed the mountains we'll be able to sell it for food. Do you think we're going to give it to you after all the trouble and effort we've been to? It's raining, so be off home with you."

She bowed again and said, "But the Great Sage promised to give it back when he'd put the fire out. I'm very sorry about all that has happened. It was only because I was feeling so upset that I put you to all that trouble.

We too have learned to live like human beings. The only thing is that we had not been converted to the pursuit of the true achievement. Now our true bodies have turned to the West, and we will not dare do anything wicked again. I beg you to return the fan so that I can reform and cultivate myself."

"Great Sage," said the local deity, "let us make full use of this woman's knowledge of the art of extinguishing fire to put these fires out for good, and give her back her fan. Then I will be able to live here in peace, help the people who live here, and be given offerings of blood and food. This would truly be a great kindness to me."

"I heard the local people saying that when the fan puts the flames out in these mountains they can only gather one harvest before they start burning again," said Monkey. "How are we going to be able to put them out forever?"

"All you have to do to put the flames out forever," said Raksasi, "is wave the fan forty－nine times. Then they'll never burn again."

Now that Brother Monkey knew this he took the fan and fanned the mountains with it forty－nine times as hard as he possibly could, whereupon heavy rain began to pour down. The fan really was a treasure: where there were flames it rained, and where there were not the sky was clear. By standing where there no flames master and disciples avoided getting wet. After spending the night sitting there they got the horse and luggage ready the next morning and returned the fan to Raksasi.

"If I don't give it back to you," Monkey said, "people might say I don't keep my word. Take the fan with you, go back to your mountain and don't make any more trouble. As you've achieved human form I'll spare your life." Taking the fan from him Raksasi said the words of the spell, pinched the thread so that it shrank back to the size of an apricot leaf and put it in her mouth. She then thanked them all and prepared to cultivate her conduct as a hermit. Later she too achieved the true reward and her name was made eternally famous through the scriptures. Raksasi and the local god expressed their deep gratitude to the four sages and escorted them along their way. As Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand escorted Sanzang along his way their bodies felt cool and the ground under their feet was pleasantly damp. This was indeed a case of With the help of trigrams Kan and Li the primal is compounded; When fire and water are balanced the Great Way is completed.

If you don't know how many years it was till they returned to the East,

listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 62

Cleansed and with a Washed Heart He Sweeps the Pagoda

The Devils Are Captured and Converted; the Body Is Cultivated

Through all the hours it must never be forgotten:

When success is won all time will be put away.

For five years and sixty thousand miles

Do not let the holy water dry up,

Do not allow the fire to flag.

When water and fire are in balance no harm will arise;

The Five Elements are joined as if with hooks.

Ying and Yang in harmony climb the cloud tower,

Riding the phoenix to the purple palace,

And flying on the crane to magical Yingzhou.

This lyric is set to the tune *Lin jiang xian.* It tells how Tang Sanzang and his disciples with the help of water and fire cooled their natures and borrowed the fan that was pure Yin to blow out the flames on the distant mountains. It took them many days to cover the 250 miles as they made their way West feeling relaxed and free of care. It was now the time when late autumn was becoming early winter, and this is what they saw: The petals of wild chrysanthemums wilting,

The tender new blossom of the plum.

In all the villages crops are gathered in;

Delicious broth is everywhere enjoyed.

As the trees are stripped of leaves distant forests can be seen; Ravines are thickly frosted and the quiet valleys pure.

In response to the cold season

The silkworms are put away to hibernate.

In pure Yin and Yang

The moon rules over the primal ocean;

Where water is at the full

Shun's sun shines with merciful brightness.

Earth vapors sink,

Sky vapors rise.

The rainbow is no more to be seen,

While slowly ice forms over the pond.

Flowers fall from the creepers on the cliff,

While bamboo and pine show still greener in the cold.

When the four of them had traveled a lot further they approached a walled and moated city. Reining in the horse the Tang Priest spoke to his disciples: "Wukong, what sort of place is that with all those tall and Chapter 62

magnificent buildings?" Monkey looked and saw that the city was like this: A wall of bronze, shaped like a dragon,

And in the form of a crouching tiger,

From all directions fine carriages approach

And many a wheel has smoothed the roads to it.

Amazing beasts are carved on the balustrades of marble;

Statues of great men stand on pedestals of gold.

This is indeed a blessed capital,

A true metropolis.

Its vast domains are firmly held;

The dynasty has flourished for a thousand years.

To the monarch's goodness the barbarians submit;

Here is the holy gathering from islands and from sea.

Before the palace steps is purity;

Peace reigns on the highways.

The bars are full of noise and song;

Bliss is found in the houses of pleasure.

Outside the palace grow trees of eternal spring

Where phoenixes sing their greetings to the dawn.

"Master," said Monkey, "that city is a royal capital."

"The world is full of prefectural cities and county seats," laughed Pig. "What makes you so sure that this is a royal capital?"

"You don't seem to realize that royal capitals are different from prefectural cities and county towns," Monkey replied. "Just look. It's got over ten gates and the wall must measure twenty or thirty miles around. Those towers are so high they disappear into the clouds. How could anything except a royal capital be as grand as that?"

"You're right, brother," said Friar Sand, "it is a royal city. But what's it called?"

"How can I tell?" Monkey replied. "There aren't any signs or banners. We'll have to go into it and ask."

The venerable elder whipped on his horse and was soon at a gate,

where he dismounted to cross the bridge and go in to look. They saw the six main streets and the three markets, where commerce was flourishing, as well as the imposing clothes of the noble and great. Then as they were walking along they saw a dozen or so Buddhist monks in chains and cangues, heavy boards locked round their necks, begging from door to door.

They were dressed in rags.

"The fox mourns for the death of the hare," sighed Sanzang. "All things are sorry for their own kind. Go and ask them, Wukong, why they are being punished like that."

Doing as he had been told, Monkey asked, "What monastery are you from, monks? Why are you in cangues and chains?"

"My lord," said the monks, all falling to their knees, "we are from the Golden Light Monastery and we have been wronged."

"Where is the Golden Light Monastery?" Monkey asked.

"Just round the corner," they replied.

Monkey led them to the Tang Priest and asked them, "How have you been wronged? Tell me."

"We don't know where you're from, but you look a little familiar to us, my lords," the monks replied. "We don't dare talk here. Please come to our poor monastery where we can tell you our woes."

"Very well," said the venerable elder, "we shall go to their monastery and ask them all the details." They went with them to the monastery gate, over which was a board on which was written in letters of gold
NATION – PROTECTING GOLDEN LIGHT MONASTERY

FOUNDED BY ROYAL COMMAND

When master and disciples went inside to look around this is what they saw: Cold were the lamps in the ancient hall;

Wind blew the leaves along deserted cloisters.

A thousand – foot pagoda touched the clouds;

Pine trees grew to nourish the nature.

Chapter 62

Fallen blooms carpeted the unvisited grounds;

Spiders span cobwebs all over the eaves.

The drum－stand was empty,

The bell hung in vain,

And the frescoes could barely be seen through the dust.

Still was the pulpit where no priest could be seen,

Silent the dhyana hall except for the birds.

The desolation made one long to sigh;

Its dreariness caused great pain.

Although an incense burner stood before the Buddha

All was cold ash, withered flowers and desolation.

All this made Sanzang miserable, and he could not help his tears flowing. The monks in their cangues and chains pushed open the doors of the main Buddha－hall and invited him to step inside and worship the Buddha. Sanzang entered, offered the incense of his heart and said the recitation three times. Then he turned round again to see six or seven young monks locked to the pillars outside the abbot's lodgings. It was more than he could bear.

When he entered the abbot's lodgings and all the monks came to kowtow to him they asked, "You reverend gentlemen look rather different. Are you from Great Tang in the East?"

"You must have second sight," Monkey said with a laugh. "We are indeed, but how could you tell?"

"We don't have second sight, my lords," the monks replied. "It's just that because we're so distressed at the injustice we've suffered and because there's nowhere else we can turn, we have been calling on heaven and earth for days on end. Some heavenly deity must have been moved by us because last night we all had the same dream. We were told that a holy monk was coming from Great Tang in the East

who would save our lives and right our wrongs. We knew who you were today because you looked rather unusual."

This pleased Sanzang greatly. "What country is this, and what injustice have you suffered?" he asked.

"My lord," said the monks on their knees, "this country is called Jisai, and it's one of the biggest in the West.

In the old days the foreign states all around used to send tribute: Yuetuo in the South, Gaochang to the North, Western Liang in the East, and Benbo to the West. Every year they used to offer fine jade, bright pearls, beautiful women and magnificent horses. We never had to resort to arms or send expeditions against them: they naturally acknowledged us as their suzerain."

"If they did that your king must understand the Way and your civil and military officials be wise and good,"

Sanzang said.

"My lord," the monks replied to Sanzang's question, "our country's civil officials are not wise, our generals are not good, and our monarch does not understand the Way. Auspicious clouds used to gather round the pagoda of our monastery and mists of good omen rose high above it. The glow above it at night could once be seen from thousands of miles away; the coloured vapors were admired by the countries all around. That was why this was a divinely－appointed capital to which all the foreigners sent tribute. But three years ago at midnight on the first day of the first month of autumn it rained blood. The next morning everyone was terrified and miserable. All the ministers submitted a memorial to the throne: they didn't understand why heaven was so angry with us. Taoists were asked to perform purifications and Buddhist monks to recite sutras as an offering to heaven and earth. Goodness only knows why, but our golden pagoda has been contaminated, and for the last two years no foreign countries have sent tribute. Our king wanted to send armies to punish them, but the officials said that the reason why foreign countries weren't sending tribute was that the auspicious clouds and mists of good omen had disappeared, and this was because we monks had stolen the treasure

from the pagoda in our monastery. The stupid king did not investigate, and those corrupt officials had all us monks arrested.

We have been beaten and tortured in every possible way. There used to be three generations of us monks in this monastery, but the two older generations both died off because they couldn't take the beating and torture.

Now we've been arrested and made to wear these cangues and chains. Your Honour, we could never be so wicked as to steal the treasure from the pagoda. We implore you to take pity on your fellows and in your great mercy and compassion make wide use of your dharma powers and save our lives."

At this Sanzang nodded and said with a sigh, "This is an obscure business that will be hard to sort out. The court is ruling badly, and you are suffering a calamity. If it was the rain of blood that contaminated your pagoda why did you not report the fact to your king at the time? Instead you let yourselves in for this calamity."

"We are only common mortals, your lordship, and had no way—of telling what heaven had in mind. Besides, our elders didn't understand. What could we be expected to do about it?"

"What's the time, Wukong?" Sanzang asked.

"About four in the afternoon," Monkey replied.

"I would like to see the king to present our passport," Sanzang said, "but I cannot solve these monks' problem and report on it to His Majesty. When I left Chang'an I made a vow in the Famen Monastery that on my journey West I would burn incense at every temple I passed, worship the Buddha in every monastery I came across, and sweep every pagoda I saw. Today I have met these monks who have been wronged on account of their pagoda. Will you get me a new broom while I take a bath? I shall then go up to sweep it and find out what has contaminated it and why it does not gleam any longer. Once I have found out the truth it will be much easier to report on it in person to the king and rescue them from their misery."

As soon as the monks in cangues and chains heard this they hurried to the kitchen to fetch a big vegetable chopper that they handed to Pig.

"Take this chopper, your lordship," they said, "and cut through the iron locks holding the young monks to the pillars so that they can prepare you some food and tea and wait on your master while he eats

and bathes.

Meanwhile we shall go out on the streets again to beg for a new broom for your master to sweep the pagoda with."

"There's no problem about opening locks," laughed Pig. "We don't need knives or axes. Just ask the hairy – faced gentleman: he's been opening locks for years." Monkey then stepped forward and used lock – opening magic: one touch and the locks all fell open. The young monks all ran into the kitchen to clean up the cooking pots and stove and prepare the meal. When Sanzang and his disciples had eaten and it was Chapter 62

gradually getting dark the monks in cangues and chains came in with two brooms to Sanzang's great delight.

As they were talking a young monk came in to light the lamp and invite Sanzang to take his bath. By now the sky was bright with the moon and the stars, and from the look – out towers the watches of the night were being beaten out on the drum. It was indeed the time when

Cold breezes blow around the walls,

And lamps are lit in every house.

Along the streets all the doors are shut;

The gates of the three markets are all closed.

The fishing boat is sheltered under the trees;

The ploughing ox is let off its rope.

The woodman gives his axe a rest,

While the schoolboy can be heard reciting his lessons.

When Sanzang had bathed he put on a narrow – sleeved tunic, tightened the belt around his waist, put on a pair of boots, and took the new brooms. "You sleep here while I sweep the pagoda," he said to the monks.

"The pagoda was contaminated by the rain of blood," Monkey said,

"and it hasn't shone for many a long day.

There may be evil things living up there. If you go up by yourself on this cold and windy night I'm worried that something might go wrong. Why don't I go with you?"

"Very good idea," Sanzang replied, and each carrying a broom they first went up into the main Buddha hall, where Sanzang lit the glazed lamp, burned incense, and bowed to the Buddha saying, "Your disciple Chen Xuanzang has been sent by the Great Tang in the East to worship out Tathagata Buddha on Vulture Peak and fetch the scriptures. I have now reached the Golden Light Monastery in the kingdom of Jisai, where the monks tell me that their pagoda has been contaminated and that they have been unjustly punished because the king suspects them of having stolen the treasure. Your disciple is now going devoutly to sweep the tower in the hope that my Buddha in his great responsiveness will reveal the cause of the contamination and spare these folk from injustice."

When he had prayed he and Brother Monkey opened the door of the pagoda and began to sweep it from the ground upwards. That pagoda

Towered to the stars,

Chapter 62

Thrust up into space.

It was called the glazed tile pagoda,

The golden sarira spire.

The stairway spiraled like the inside of a cave;

The door seemed to be the door of a coop.

The gleam of the vase reached the moon at the horizon;

The sea breeze carried the sound of its bells.

Look at the eaves and corbel brackets,

The finial in the clouds.

The eaves and corbel brackets

Were of masonry through which the scented breezes blew.

The finial in the clouds

Had mist dragons coiling around the pagoda.

The view stretched out for hundreds of miles;

To climb it was to climb to the heavens.

At the doors of every story were set glazed lamps,

But full of dust, not light.

All around under the eaves ran marble balustrades,

Covered with filth and insects.

Inside the tower,

By the Buddha statues,

Incense no longer burned.

Outside the windows,

In front of the divine face,

Cobwebs covered all.

The incense – burners were full of mouse – droppings,

The lamps untouched by oil.

Because the treasure had been spirited away

Many a monk had died for nothing.

Sanzang was determined to sweep out the pagoda

And restore to it the beauty that it had before.

When he had swept one story the Tang Priest went on to sweep the next, and so he continued till he reached the seventh story. By now it was the second watch of the night and he was beginning to feel exhausted.

"You're tired," Monkey said. "Sit here and let me sweep it for you."

"How many stories does it have?" Sanzang asked.

"About thirteen I suppose," Monkey replied. Overcoming his weariness the Tang Priest said, "I must sweep it myself to fulfil the vow." By the time he had swept another three stories his back and his legs were aching. At the tenth he collapsed and said, "Sweep the last three floors for me, Wukong."

Monkey summoned up his energy, went to the eleventh floor, and a moment later up to the twelfth. As he was sweeping there he heard voices from in the roof. "That's odd," he thought, "Very odd indeed. It's the third watch. They can't be people talking up there as late as this. I'm sure it's evil spirits. Let's have a look."

The splendid Monkey King put his broom quietly under his arm, tucked up his clothes, slipped out through the door, and stepped on a cloud to take a better look. Sitting in the middle of the thirteenth story were two evil spirits with a dish of food, a bowl, and a jug of wine. They were playing the finger–guessing game and drinking.

Monkey used his magic powers to get rid of the broom and bring out his gold–banded cudgel, with which he barricaded the entrance to the pagoda and shouted, "So you're the ones who stole the pagoda's treasure, you monsters." The two of them jumped up in their panic, grabbed the jug and bowl, and flung them at him.

Monkey deflected them with his iron cudgel and said, "I won't kill you because I need you to give evidence."

He just used his cudgel to force them to talk. The devils were pinned against the wall, unable to struggle or even move. All they could do was to repeat, "Spare us, spare us. It was nothing to do with us. The thief isn't here."

Monkey used holding magic to carry them single–handed down to the tenth story, where he said, "Master, I've got the thieves."

This news woke up Sanzang, who had been dozing, with a start of pleasure. "Where did you catch them?" he asked.

Dragging the demons over and forcing them to kneel to his master Monkey replied, "They were drinking and playing finger – guessing up in the roof. When I heard the din they were making I shot up by cloud to the roof and blocked their escape. I wasn't rough with them because I was worried that a single blow would kill them and we'd have nobody to give evidence. That's why I brought them here nice and gently. You can take Chapter 62

statements from them, Master, and find out where they're from and where the stolen treasure has been hidden."

The demons were still shivering and shaking and saying, "Spare us!" Then they made this true statement. "We were sent by the Infinitely Sage Dragon King of the Green Wave Pool on the Ragged Rock Mountain. His name's Benborba and mine is Baborben. He's catfish spirit and I'm a snakehead fish spirit. Our Infinitely Sage Ancient Dragon has a daughter called the Infinitely Sage Princess. She is as lovely as flowers or the moon and brilliant as well. The Ancient Dragon got a husband for her who would live in the palace. He has tremendous magic powers and he's called Prince Ninehead. He came here the other year with the dragon king to demonstrate his powers by making a blood rain that contaminated the pagoda and stealing the precious sarira relic of the Buddha. The princess then went up to the Daluo Heaven and stole the Queen Mother's nine – lobed magic fungus plant from in front of the Hall of Miraculous Mist. We keep it at the bottom of the pool, and it shines day and night with golden light and a coloured glow. Recently we've heard that Sun Wukong is on his way to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. They say his powers are enormous, and that all along the way he has been looking out for wrongs to right. That's why we keep getting sent here to patrol and stop him when the comes. If that Sun Wukong turns up we're ready for him."

At this Monkey gave a mocking laugh. "What an evil beast," he said. "He's unspeakable. No wonder he invited the Bull Demon King to his place for a banquet the other day. He's been extending his contacts among all these damned demons because he's up to no good."

Before he had finished speaking Pig and two or three of the young monks came up the steps from the bottom of the pagoda with lanterns.

"Master," Pig said, "why don't you go to bed now that you've swept the pagoda instead of staying here talking?"

"You've come at just the right moment, brother," said Monkey. "The pagoda's treasure was stolen by the Infinitely Sage Ancient Dragon. He sent these two little devils I've just captured to patrol the pagoda and keep their ears open for news of us."

"What are they called, and what sort of spirits are they?" Pig asked.

"They've just confessed everything," Monkey replied. "This one's called Benborba and he's a catfish spirit, and that one's Baborben and he's a snakehead fish spirit." Pig then lifted his rake to strike them.

"If they're evil spirits and they've already confessed," he said, "what are we waiting for? Let's kill them."

"No," said Monkey, "you don't understand. Keep them alive so that they can tell it all to the king and lead us to catch the thieves and get the treasure back." The splendid idiot then put his rake down again. He and Monkey each carried one of them down the stairs.

"Spare us," the demons kept pleading.

"I'd like to turn you two fish into soup for those monks who've been mistreated so unjustly," muttered Pig.

The two or three young monks, who were thoroughly delighted, led the venerable elder down the pagoda stairs with their lanterns. One of them ran ahead to tell the other monks.

"Good news," he shouted, "good news! Our troubles are over. The reverend gentlemen have caught the evil spirits who stole the treasure."

Chapter 62

863

Journey to the West

"Fetch chains," Monkey said, "run them through their shoulder −bones, and lock them up here. Watch over them while we get some sleep. We'll decide what to do next tomorrow." The monks then kept a

very close watch on the demons while Sanzang and his disciples slept.

Before they knew it it was dawn. "Wukong and I will go to court to present the passport," Sanzang said, and he put on his brocade cassock and Vairocana mitre. When he was dressed in his majestic vestments he strode forward, accompanied by Monkey, who had tightened his tigerskin kilt and straightened up his tunic and was carrying the passport.

"Why aren't you taking those two demons with you?" Pig asked.

"We'll submit a memorial to the throne first," Monkey replied, "then I expect the king will send men for them." They then went to the palace gates, seeing no end of red birds and golden dragons adorning the deep red gateways of the pure capital.

At the Gate of Eastern Splendor Sanzang bowed to the officer in charge and said, "May I trouble Your Honour to report that a monk sent from Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven begs an audience with His Majesty to present his passport?"

The gate officer did indeed make this report, going to the steps of the throne to say, "There are two Buddhist monks with strange faces and strange clothes outside who say they have been sent by the Tang court in the East of the Southern Continent of Jambu to go to the West to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures.

They request an audience with Your Majesty in order to present their passport." The king then sent for them.

As the Tang Priest took him into the palace all the civilian and military officials were alarmed at the sight of Monkey. Some called him the monkey monk, and others the thunder–god monk; they were all too terrified to look at him for very long. The Tang Priest bowed to the king with a dance and a loud chant of obeisance, while the Great Sage stood leaning to one side with his arms crossed, not moving.

The venerable elder then submitted this memorial: "I am a priest who has been sent by the Great Tang in the East of the Southern Continent of Jambu to worship the Buddha and fetch the true scriptures in Thunder Monastery in the land of India in the West. As my route lies across your distinguished country I would not dare cross without authorization, and I beg you to verify the passport I have with me and allow me to proceed."

The king was very pleased to hear all this, so he summoned the holy priest from Tang to the throne hall, where an embroidered stool was set for him to sit on. Sanzang went into the hall by himself and handed over the passport before gratefully accepting the courtesy stool.

When the king read the passport through he was delighted. "It appears that when your Great Tang emperor was ill he could choose an eminent monk who would not flinch from a long journey to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. But all the monks in our country want to do is to steal, thus destroying the country and ruining their sovereign."

When Sanzang heard this he put his hands together and replied, "How can you be so sure they are destroying the country and ruining their sovereign?"

"This country of ours is the leading one in the Western Regions. The foreign states all around always used to send tribute because of the golden pagoda in the Golden Light Monastery in this capital. A multicolored glow Chapter 62

used to shine from the pagoda right up to the sky. But recently the pagoda's treasure has been stolen by the wicked monks in the monastery, and for three years now there has been no coloured glow and no tribute from the foreigners. It is all extremely upsetting for us."

"Your Majesty," said Sanzang, smiling as he put his hands together in front of his chest, "a little mistake can lead to a great disaster. Soon after entering the gates of your heavenly capital yesterday I saw a dozen or so monks in cangues. When I asked them why they told me that they were from the Golden Light Monastery and were the victims of injustice. On close investigation in the monastery I found that it was no fault of the monks there. When I swept the pagoda in the middle of the night I captured the thieving devils who had stolen the treasure."

"Where are they?" asked the delighted king.

"My disciples have them locked up in the Golden Light Monastery," Sanzang replied.

The king ordered royal guards to be sent at once to the Golden Light Monastery to fetch the thieving devils so that he could interrogate them himself. "Your Majesty, I think it would be best if my disciple went with the guards."

"Where is he?" the king asked.

"Standing by the steps of the throne," Sanzang replied.

The king was shocked by what he saw. "How can your disciple be so ugly when you, reverend sir, are so handsome?" he asked.

When he heard this the Great Sage Sun shouted at the top of his voice, "Your Majesty, you should no more judge people by their faces than you'd measure the sea with a bucket. Good looks would never have captured the thieving devils."

This calmed the king's alarm, and he said, "You are right, holy monk. We do not know how to select men of talent here. The ones who catch the thieves and recover the treasure are best." He then ordered his aides to have a carriage prepared and told the royal guards to look after the holy monk as he went to fetch the thieving devils. The aides had a large palanquin with a yellow canopy got ready in which eight guardsmen carried Monkey with eight more as escorts who shouted to clear the way to the Golden Light Monastery. By now the whole city had heard the news; everyone came out to see the holy monk and the thieving devils.

Hearing the shouts Pig and Friar Sand, imagining that the king must have sent some of his officials, hurried out to meet them, only to see Monkey riding in the palanquin. "Now you're yourself again, brother," laughed Pig.

"What do you mean?" Monkey asked, putting his hand on Pig to steady himself as he stepped out of the chair.

"There you are, being carried by eight men in a carrying chair under a royal yellow canopy," said Pig. "Isn't that the way the Handsome Monkey King should travel? That's why I said you're yourself again."

"Stop joking," said Monkey, who then had the two devils brought for him to escort to the king.

"Won't you take me along too?" Friar Sand asked.

"You stay here and look after the luggage and the horse," Monkey

replied.

Chapter 62

"My lords," said the monks in cangues and chains, "why don't you all go to see His Majesty? We can look after your things here."

"In that case we'll all go to report to the king," said Monkey, "and then have you released." With Pig manhandling one devil and Friar Sand the other, Monkey got back into the palanquin, and led the devils to the court.

They were soon at the steps of the throne hall, where the king was told that the devils had arrived. He came down from his dragon throne to examine them with the Tang Priest and his civil and military officials. One of the devils had bulging cheeks, black scales, a pointed mouth and sharp teeth. The other had slimy skin, a fat belly, a big mouth and long whiskers. Although they had legs and could walk it was obvious that they had only assumed a certain appearance of humanity through transformation.

"Where are you from, you thieving devils, you evil spirits?" the king asked. "How long have you been preying on this country? Which year did you steal our treasure? How many of you bandits are there? What are your names? I want it all, and I want the truth." The two devils fell to their knees before him, and although blood was gushing from their necks they did not feel the pain. This was what they had to say:

"Three years ago, on the first day of the seventh month, the Infinitely Sage Dragon King brought a crowd of his relations to live in the Southeast corner of this country, in the Green Wave Pool on Ragged Rock Mountain about forty miles from here. He has an extremely attractive daughter for whom he found a husband to live in our palace, Prince Ninehead. His magic powers are unbeatable. He knew that you had a rare treasure in your tower, so he plotted with the dragon king to steal it. First he made it rain blood and then he stole the Buddha relic. Now it lights up the dragon palace, which is as bright as day even in the darkest night. Then the princess used her powers to sneak up and steal the Queen Mother's magic fungus to keep the treasure warm in the pool. We two aren't the bandit chiefs. We're just private soldiers sent here by the dragon king who were captured last night. This is the truth."

"As you have made this confession," the king said, "why don't you tell me your names?"

"I am Benborba," one of them replied, "and he is Baborben. I am a catfish monster and he is a snakehead monster."

The king then told the royal guards to keep them safely behind bars and ordered, "Release all the monks of the Golden Light Monastery from their cangues and chains, and have the Office of Foreign Affairs prepare a banquet in the Unicom Hall to congratulate the holy monks on their great achievements in catching the thieves. We shall now invite them to capture the ringleaders."

The Office of Foreign Affairs then laid on a double banquet of both meat and vegetarian food, for which the king invited Sanzang and his disciples to take their places in the Unicorn Hall.

"May I ask your title, holy monk?" he said to Sanzang, who replied, his hands together, "My lay surname is Chen, and my Buddhist name Xuanzang. My emperor granted me the surname Tang and the title Sanzang."

"What are your disciple's titles?" the king asked.

"They do not have titles," Sanzang replied. "The senior one is called Sun Wukong, the second one Zhu Wuneng, and the third Sha Wujing. These were the names the Bodhisattva Guanyin of the Southern Sea gave them. When they became my disciples I called Wukong Sun the Novice, Wuneng Bajie and Wujing Friar Sand."

The king then asked Sanzang to take the place of honour while Monkey sat at his left and Pig and Friar Sand at his right. Their banquet was all vegetarian: fruit, vegetables, tea and rice. In front of them was a table of meat dishes at which sat the king, and below him were a hundred or more tables set with meat dishes for all the civil and military officials. The officials all thanked the king for his kindness, and the disciples sat down with the permission of their master. When all were seated the king raised his goblet, and though Sanzang would not drink his three disciples all drank to the success of the banquet. Woodwinds and strings then began to sound as the court

musicians performed.

Just watch Pig as he eats for all he is worth, gobbling his food down whole like a tiger or a wolf and emptying the table. Soon more soup and food was brought, only to disappear in the same way. Every time servants brought more wine he drained the cup, never refusing. The feast went on till after midday before it broke up.

When Sanzang expressed his thanks for the sumptuous banquet the king wanted to keep him longer. "It was just a gesture to thank you holy monks for catching the demons." He then ordered the Office of Foreign Affairs to move the banquet to the Jianzhang Palace so that he could discuss with the holy monks how the ringleaders were to be captured and the treasure brought back to the pagoda.

"If we are to capture the thieves and recover the treasure," Sanzang said, "another banquet won't be needed.

We shall take our leave of Your Majesty now and set off to catch the demons."

But the king insisted on taking them to the Jianzhang Palace for another banquet. "Which of you holy monks will lead the force that is to capture the monsters?" he asked, raising his goblet.

"Send my senior disciple Sun Wukong," Sanzang replied. The Great Sage raised his clasped hands and bowed in acknowledgement.

"If the venerable Sun is going how big a force of cavalry and foot will he need," the king asked, "and when will he be setting out?"

At this Pig could not restrain himself from shouting, "We won't need any soldiers, and we don't care when we go. With a good meal and a few drinks inside us he and I can go and catch them right now, just by laying our hands on them."

"Bajie," said Sanzang with delight, "you're getting very keen."

"Very well then," said Monkey. "Friar Sand, you guard the master while we two go."

"Even if you two venerable elders don't need troops," the king said, "surely you need weapons."

"We don't need your weapons," laughed Pig. "We carry our own." On hearing this the king fetched two huge goblets and drank a toast to

them on their journey.

"We won't have any more to drink," said Monkey. "But we'd like the royal guards to bring those little demons to us. We need them as guides." The king gave the order and they were brought out at once. Then Monkey and Pig, each firmly grasping a demon, rode the wind and used carrying magic to take them off to the Southeast. Indeed:

Only when king and court saw the magical clouds

Did they realize that the four of them were truly holy monks.

If you don't know how the capture went and what they found, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 63

Two Monks Wipe out the Demons in the Dragon Palace

The Sages Destroy Evil and Recover the Treasure

The story tells how the king of Jisai and his officials high and low watched as the Great Sage Monkey and Pig disappeared by wind and cloud, carrying the two demons with them. Then all of them bowed in homage to heaven, saying, "Their fame is well founded. Only today can we really believe that such immortals and living Buddhas exist." As Monkey and Pig vanished into the distance the king bowed again to thank Sanzang and Friar Sand.

"Our mortal eyes were only able to see that your illustrious disciples had the power to capture thieving devils.

We never realized that you were superior immortals with the power to ride on winds and clouds."

"I do not have any dharma powers," Sanzang replied. "On my journey I have depended very much on my three disciples."

"I tell you the truth, Your Majesty," said Friar Sand. "My senior fellow —disciple is the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who has been converted. He once made havoc in Heaven, and none of the hundred thousand

heavenly troops was a match for his gold–banded cudgel. He had the Supreme Lord Lao Zi and the Jade Emperor both scared. My next senior fellow–disciple is Marshal Tian Peng, now a faithful Buddhist. He once commanded 80,000 sailors on the River of Heaven. I'm the only one of us with no magic powers: I was the Curtain–lifting General before I took my vows. We're useless at everything except capturing demons and monsters, arresting thieves and runaways, subduing tigers and dragons, and kicking the sky into a well. And we know a thing or two about stirring up the sea and turning rivers upside–down. Oh yes, and then there's riding clouds and mists, summoning wind and rain, moving the stars around in the sky, carrying mountains, and chasing the moon: but those are just extras." All this made the king treat them with very great respect Indeed: Inviting Sanzang to take the place of honour, he kept addressing him as "Buddha" and referring to Friar Sand and the others as bodhisattvas. All the civil and military officials were delighted, and the citizens of the country kowtowed to them.

The story switches to the Great Sage Monkey and Pig riding their storm wind to the Green Wave Pool on the Ragged Rock Mountain, where they stopped their clouds.

Blowing a magic breath on his gold–banded cudgel Wukong told it to change and turned it into a monk's knife with which he cut an ear off the snakehead and the lower lip of the catfish, then threw the two demons into the water with a shout of, "Tell the Infinitely Sage Dragon King that Lord Sun, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, is here. If he wants me to spare the lives of him and his family he'd better hand over the treasure from the pagoda of the Golden Light Monastery in Jisai at once. If there's even the hint of a 'no' from him I'll give this pool such a stirring that there'll be no water left in it and then exterminate his whole family."

Chapter 63

Having been given this order the two little devils fled for their lives in great pain, jumping into the water, chains, ropes and all, to the alarm of the various turtle, alligator, shrimp, crab and fish spirits, who crowded round them to ask, "Why are you roped and chained?"

Once of them shook his head and waved his tail with his hand over his

ear; the other stamped and beat his chest as he covered his mouth. There was much shouting and commotion as they both went to the dragon king's palace to report, "Disaster, Your Majesty."

The Infinitely Sage Dragon King was drinking with his son—in—law Prince Ninehead when the two of them arrived. "What disaster?" the dragon king asked, putting down his cup.

"We were on sentry duty last night," they reported, "when the Tang Priest and Sun the Novice captured us as they were sweeping the pagoda. We were chained up and taken to see the king this morning. Then Sun the Novice and Pig dragged us here. One of us had an ear cut off and the other a lip. Then they threw us into the water to come to ask for the treasure from the top of the pagoda." They then told the whole story in great detail. The news about Sun the Novice, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, gave the ancient dragon such a fright that his souls left his body and were scattered beyond the sky.

"Son—in—law," he said to the prince, shivering and shaking, "anyone else would have been easy enough to deal with; but if it's him it's terrible."

"Relax, father—in—law," the prince replied. "I've been studying the martial arts since childhood and made friends with quite a few of the world's heroes. He's nothing to be scared of. After three rounds with me I guarantee the wretch will surrender with his head hanging so low he won't even dare look you in the face."

The splendid demon jumped to his feet, put on his armor, took the weapon he used, a crescent—bladed halberd, walked out of the palace, parted the waters, and when he reached the surface called out, "What's all this about a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven'? Come and give yourself up at once." Standing on the bank, Pig and Monkey saw how the evil spirit was dressed:

A silver helmet on his head,

Outshone the whitest snow;

The suit of armor that he wore

Was higher than autumn frost.

Over it was a battle—robe of brocade,

With dragons, cloud—patterns and pearls;

The rhinoceros – patterned belt at his waist

Was like a python wrapped in gold.

He held a crescent halberd

That flew and flashed like lightning;

The pigskin boots on his feet

Moved as smoothly as water or waves.

From a distance he seemed to have only one face and head,

But seen from close to there were faces all around him:

Eyes in front and eyes behind

That could see in all directions;

Mouths to the left and mouths to the right,

Nine of them, all talking.

One shout from him would make the sky shake

Like the call of the crane resounding through the stars.

As nobody answered he shouted again, "Which of you is the Great Sage Equaling Heaven?"

Touching the golden band round his head and fingering his iron cudgel, Monkey replied, "I am."

"Where do you live?" the demon asked. "Where are you from? What brought you to Jisai to look after the king's pagoda? Why did you have the effrontery to capture and mutilate two of our officers? And why are you here demanding battle now?"

"Thieving devil," replied Monkey abusively, "it's obvious you don't know who I am. Come a little closer and I'll tell you:

My people come from the Mount of Flowers and Fruit,

From the Water Curtain Cave in the middle of the sea.

Since childhood I have made my body indestructible;

The Jade Emperor created me Heaven – equaling Sage.

When I made havoc in the Dipper and Bull Palace

All the gods of Heaven were not enough to beat me.

The Buddha then was asked to use his great and subtle powers;

His infinite wisdom went beyond the mortal world.

When I matched my powers with his and made my somersaults

His hand turned to a mountain and crushed me underneath.

There I was kept for full five hundred years,

And only was released when converted by Guanyin

Because Sanzang was going to the Western Heaven

To seek the Buddha's words at distant Vulture Peak.

She freed me then to escort the holy monk,

To clear up all the monsters and purify my conduct.

Our journey led to Jisai in the regions of the West

Where there monkish generations have been cruelly mistreated.

When in our mercy we asked them what had happened

We learned that the pagoda no longer shone with light.

My master swept it clean to find out the reason.

In the deep silence of the night's third watch,

We captured the demons and extracted their confessions:

They said you were the thief who had stolen the great treasure,
Conspiring to be a robber with the ancient dragon king

And the princess who is also known as Infinitely Sage.

Your rain of blood washed out the pagoda's magic light

And you brought the treasure back to use it here yourselves.

The confession that they made was true in every detail,

And we have come here now on His Majesty's own orders.

That is why we looked for you and challenge you to battle:

Never will you need to ask my name again.

Give the king back his treasure this instant

If you want to save the lives of all members of your family.

Should you in your folly try to make resistance

Your pool will be dried out and your palace smashed to ruins."

When the prince heard all this he replied with a touch of a mocking smile, "If you're monks going to fetch the scriptures you shouldn't be trumping up charges where it's none of your business. So what if I stole their treasure? You're going to fetch your Buddhist scriptures and it's nothing to do with you. Why are you here looking for a fight?"

"Thieving devil," said Monkey, "you've got no idea of right and wrong. The king's done us no favours. We don't drink his kingdom's waters or eat its grain. We were under no obligation to do thing for him. But you have stolen his treasure, contaminated his pagoda, and brought years of misery to the monks in the Golden Light Monastery. They are our fellow believers, so of course we'll make an effort for them and

right their wrong."

"So it looks as though you want a fight," said the prince. "As the saying goes, the warrior avoids unnecessary combat; but once I start there'll be no mercy, you'll be dead in next to no time, and that will be the end of going to fetch the scriptures."

"Bloody thieving devil," Monkey cursed back, "you must think you're quite a fighter, talking big like that.

Come here and take this!" The prince was not flustered in the least as he blocked the cudgel with his crescent – bladed halberd. A fine battle ensued on the Ragged Rock Mountain.

Because the monster stole the treasure the pagoda was dark;

Monkey went to catch the demons for the sake of the king;

The little devils fled for their lives back into the water;

The ancient dragon took counsel in his terror.

Prince Ninehead showed his might

As he went out in armor to exercise his powers.

The angry Great Sage Equaling Heaven

Raised his gold – banded cudgel that was very hard Indeed:

In the monster's mine heads were eighteen eyes

Shining bright as they looked in all directions.

Monkey's iron arms were immensely strong

And auspicious lights glowed all around.

Chapter 63

The halberd was like a new moon's crescent,

The cudgel like flying frost.

"Why don't you give up trying to right wrongs?"

"You were wrong to steal the pagoda's treasure.

Behave yourself, damned devil,

And give me back the treasure if you want to live."

Cudgel and halberd fought for mastery:

Neither emerged as victor in the fight.

The two of them fought hard for over thirty rounds without either of them emerging as winner. Pig, who was standing on the mountain admiring the sweetness and beauty of their fight, raised his rake and brought down on the evil spirit from behind, Now the monster's nine heads all had eyes in them, and he could see Pig coming behind him very clearly, so he now used the butt－end of his halberd to block the rake while holding off the cudgel with the blade. He resisted for another six or seven rounds until he could hold out no longer against the weapons that were swinging at him from before and behind, when he rolled away and leapt up into the sky in his true form as a nine －headed bird. He looked thoroughly repulsive: the sight of him was enough to kill one with horror:

His body all covered in feathers and down,

His girth was some twelve feet measured around,

And he was as long as an old crocodile.

His two feet were as sharp as book－shaped blades,

And his nine heads were all set in a circle.

When he opened his wings he could fly superbly:

Not even the roc could match his great strength.

His voice could resound to the edge of the sky,

With an echo even louder than the call of the crane.

Bright flashed golden light from his many pairs of eyes;

His pride far outstripped that of ordinary birds.

Chapter 63

873

Journey to the West

The sight alarmed Pig, who said, "Brother, I've never seen anything as ugly in all my days. What sort of blood could that monstrous bird have been born of?"

"There's nothing like him," Monkey replied, "nothing. I'm going up to kill him." The splendid Great Sage then leapt up on his cloud into mid－air, where he struck at the monster's head with his cudgel. The monster now displayed the power of his body as he swooped down, his wings outspread, then turned with a roaring noise to come low over the mountain and shoot out from his waist another head with a mouth open wide like a bowl of blood. His beak gripped Pig's bristles at the first attempt, then he dragged Pig to the pool and pulled him in.

Once back outside the dragon palace he turned himself back into what he had been before, threw Pig to the ground, and said, "Where are you, little ones?"

Thereupon the mackerel, trout, carp, mandarin fish, hard and soft－shelled tortoises, and alligators, who were all armored demons, rushed forward with a shout of, "Here!"

"Take this monk and tie him up for me," said the prince. "This will be revenge for our patrolling sentries."

Shouting and pushing, the spirits carried Pig inside, to the delight of the ancient dragon king, who came out to meet the prince with the words, "Congratulations, son－in－law. How did you catch him?" The prince then told him the whole story, after which the ancient dragon ordered a celebratory banquet, which we need not describe.

Instead the story tells how Monkey thought in terror after the evil spirit had captured Pig, "This monster is terrible. But if I go back to

the court to see the master the king will probably laugh at me. But if I challenge him to battle again how will I deal with him single −handed? Besides, I'm not used to coping in water. I'll just have to turn myself into something to get inside and see what the evil spirit has done with Pig. If it's possible I'll sneak him out of there to help me."

The splendid Great Sage then made magic with his fingers, shook himself, turned into a crab again, and plunged into the water till he was outside the archway again. He knew the way from when he had come here the previous time and stolen the Bull King's water −averting golden−eyed beast. When he reached the gateway to the palace he walked in sideways to see the ancient dragon king, the nine −headed monster and their whole family drinking together to celebrate. Not daring to go too close. Monkey crawled under the eaves of the Eastern verandah, where several shrimp and crab spirits were fooling around and amusing themselves. He listened to them for a while then said, imitating their way of talking, "Is the long−snouted monk the prince brought here dead or alive?"

"He's alive," the spirits all replied, "and tied up. Can't you see him groaning under the Western verandah over there?"

Monkey then crawled quietly over to the Western verandah, where he did indeed find Pig tied to a column and groaning. "Can you recognize me, Pig?" he asked. Pig knew who it was from Monkey's voice.

"This is terrible, brother," he said. "The monster got me." Looking all around to make sure there was nobody there Monkey cut through the ropes with his claws and told Pig to go. "What am I to do, brother?" Pig said.

"He's got my rake."

"Do you know where he put it?" Monkey asked.

"I think he must have taken it into the main hall of the palace," Pig replied.

Chapter 63

"Wait for me under the arch," said Monkey, and Pig slipped quietly out

to save his skin. Monkey climbed up on the roof of the main hall, from where he saw the intense glow of Pig's rake down on the left, made himself invisible, and sneaked it out of the palace. Once under the archway he called, "Pig, take your weapon."

"You go on ahead, brother," said Pig, now reunited with his rake. "I'm going to attack that palace. If I win I'll capture the whole family of them, and if I lose you'll be waiting by the bank to rescue me." Monkey, who was delighted at the suggestion, urged him to be careful. "I'm not scared of him," Pig replied. "I know a thing or two when it comes to water." Monkey then left him and came up through the water.

Pig meanwhile tightened the belt round his black tunic, grasped his rake with both hands, and charged in with a great war－cry that sent all the members of the watery tribe rushing into the palace and shouting, "Disaster!

The long－snouted monk has broken free from his bonds and is charging back in." The ancient dragon king, the nine－headed monster and the rest of the family were caught off their guard, and all they could do was jump to their feet and flee for cover. The idiot, not fearing for his life, charged into the hall, laying about him with his rake as he went. He smashed everything: doors, tables, chairs, wine－cups and all else too. There is a poem to prove it that goes:

When the mother of wood was taken by the water monster

The mind－ape did not flinch from a difficult rescue.

One used his secret skills to open the locks;

The other one showed his might in hatred and wrath.

The prince fled, taking his princess to safety;

Not a sound was heard from the shivering dragon.

The palace's crimson windows and doors were all smashed;

The dragon's descendants were all scared out of their wits.

Pig smashed the tortoise－shell screens to powder and the coral trees to fragments.

When the nine－headed monster had hidden his princess safely inside

he grabbed his crescent – bladed halberd and went for Pig in the front of the living quarters of the palace, shouting, "Bloody idiot! Swine! How dare you terrorize my family?"

"Thieving devil," retorted Pig. "How dared you capture me? This was none of my fight till you brought me into it. Give the treasure back at once for me to take back to the king and that'll be that. Otherwise every last member of your family will be killed." The demon was in no mood for kindness: he ground his teeth and started fighting Pig. Only then did the ancient dragon calm down enough to lead his dragon sons and grandsons to surround and attack Pig with their spears and swords. Seeing that things were going badly for him Pig feinted and fled, followed by the ancient dragon and his host. A moment later he shot up through the water and they all surfaced at the top of the pool.

Chapter 63

875

Journey to the West

Monkey, who had been waiting on the bank, suddenly saw them coming out of the water after Pig, so he put one foot on a cloud and brought out his iron cudgel with a shout of, "Stay where you are." His first blow smashed the ancient dragon king to pulp. It was a terrible sight: his corpse and the scales that had come off it floated on the surface of the pool, which turned red with his gore. His sons and grandsons all fled for their lives in terror, while Prince Ninehead took the body back to the underwater palace.

Brother Monkey and Pig did not pursue them but went back to the bank to discuss what had happened. "I've knocked a bit of the stuffing out of him," said Pig. "I went charging in with my rake and smashed everything to smithereens. They were all scared witless. I was just fighting the prince when the ancient dragon king went for me. Thanks for killing him. Now those bastards have gone back they'll be too busy with mourning and the funeral to come out again. Besides it's getting late now. What are we going to do?"

"Never mind about it being late," replied Monkey. "This is our chance. Get back down there and attack again.

You must get the treasure so that we can go back to court." The idiot was feeling lazy so he made all sorts of excuses to get out of going down again, but Monkey insisted: "Don't worry so, brother. Just draw him out again as you did just now and I'll kill him."

As the two of them were talking they heard the roar of a mighty wind as dark and gloomy clouds came from the East, heading South. When Monkey took a closer look he saw that it was the Illustrious Sage Erlang with the Six Brothers of Plum Hill. They had falcons and hounds and were carrying foxes, hares, water–deer and deer that they had killed. All of them had bows and crossbows at their waists and were carrying sharp swords as they arrived on their wind and clouds.

"Pig," said Monkey, "here come my seven–sage–sworn brothers. Let's stop them and ask them to help us in this fight. This will really stack the odds in our favour."

"If they're your sworn brothers they owe you that," said Pig.

"The only trouble is that the eldest of them, the Illustrious Sage, once made me surrender, so I feel too embarrassed to face him," said Monkey. "I'd like you to go up, stop the clouds and say, 'Wait a moment please, True Lord. The Great Sage Equaling Heaven would like to pay his respects.' I'm sure he'll stop then. I can only face him after he's landed."

The idiot then shot up on his cloud to the top of the mountain to stop Erlang. "True Lord," he shouted at the top of his voice, "could you slow down for a moment? The Great Sage Equaling Heaven would like to see you." On hearing this Lord Erlang ordered the six brothers to stop and exchanged polite salutations with Pig.

"Where is the Great Sage Equaling Heaven?" he asked.

"Awaiting your summons at the foot of the mountain," Pig replied.

"Brothers," said Erlang, "go and ask him up at once."

The six brothers Kang, Zhang, Yao, Li, Guo and Zhi all came out of their camps and said, "Great Sage, our eldest brother has sent us with an invitation for you."

Monkey went forward, paid his respects to them, then accompanied them to the top of the mountain, where Lord Erlang received him, took him by the hand and returned his courtesies.

"Great Sage," he said, "allow me to congratulate you on being rescued from your terrible sufferings and being converted to the Buddhist faith. Soon you will have succeeded and will be sitting on your lotus throne."

"I don't deserve your congratulations," Monkey replied. "I am under enormous obligations that I've hardly begun to repay. I've been rescued and am heading West, but it's too soon to say whether we'll succeed. As we agreed to rescue some monks from disaster in the kingdom of Jisai we are here to capture a demon and demand the return of a treasure. Seeing that you are passing this way, eldest brother, I wonder if I could persuade you to stay and help us. May I ask where you have come from and whether you'd be willing to help?"

"I'm just on my way home from a hunting trip with my brothers because I had nothing to do," Erlang replied.

"I'm grateful to you, Great Sage, for asking me to stay out of consideration for our old friendship. Of course I'll help subdue a demon if that is what you wish. What kind of demons are there here?"

"Have you forgotten?" the six brothers asked. "This is the Ragged Rock Mountain, and below it is the Green Wave Pool, the Infinitely Sage Dragon's palace."

"The Infinitely Sage Ancient Dragon is no trouble–maker," said Erlang with astonishment. "How could he have robbed the pagoda?"

"Recently he's had a son–in–law living with him," Monkey replied, "a nine–headed monster turned spirit. He plotted it all with his father–in–law. They made it rain blood on Jisai then stole the sacred Buddha relic from the top of the pagoda in the Golden Light Monastery. The king in his ignorance had the monks arrested and tortured. I captured two of their underlings in the pagoda who'd been sent out on patrol when my master in his mercy swept it out one night, and they confessed everything in the palace this morning. When the king asked our master to capture these monsters we two were sent here. In the first fight the nine–headed monster grew another head that shot out from his waist and carried Pig off. I had to transform myself to go into the water and rescue him. Then there was another big fight in which I killed the ancient dragon king. The swine have recovered the body and are now in mourning. We two were just discussing how to draw them into battle again when we saw you arriving. That's why I have had the effrontery to ask to see you."

"As you've killed the ancient dragon king you'll have to hit them so hard that the monster won't know what to do," Erlang replied. "Then you can clean up the whole den of them."

"Yes," said Pig, "but it's late now."

"There's a soldier's saying that you should never put off an attack," Erlang replied. "It doesn't matter that it's late."

"Don't be so impatient brother," said Kang, Yao, Quo and Zhi. "The demon's family is here, so we don't think he'll run away. Brother Monkey is a distinguished guest, and Iron－haired Pig has been converted too. We have wine and good food in our camp. Why don't we tell the little ones to light the stove and set out a banquet here? It would be a way of congratulating them and a chance to talk at the same time. After a good night's feasting there'll be plenty of time for the battle tomorrow."

Erlang was very pleased with the suggestion: "An excellent idea, brothers." The underlings were then ordered to set out the banquet.

"We couldn't possibly refuse you gentlemen's generous invitation," Monkey replied. "But now we're monks we may only eat vegetarian food. We can't eat meat."

"We have vegetarian food in plenty," Erlang replied, "and monastic wine too." All the brothers then drank and talked of the old days under the light of the moon and the stars; when the sky was their canopy and the earth their mats.

Chapter 63

How true it is that the night is long in loneliness and short in pleasure. Soon the East started to become light and Pig, feeling very cheerful and energetic after a few drinks, said, "It's getting light. I'm going down to challenge them to battle."

"Be careful, Marshal," said Erlang. "Just lure him out for my brothers and me to deal with."

"I understand," grinned Pig, "I understand." Watch as he tucks up his clothes, grabs his rake, makes water－dividing magic, jumps in, goes

straight to the archway, and charges into the palace with a great war – cry.

The dragon sons were wearing the hempen clothes of mourning as they watched and wept over the dragon's body while the dragon grandsons and the prince were preparing the coffin at the back. Then in came Pig, roaring abuse at them. He landed a terrible blow from his rake that made nine holes in a dragon son's head.

The dragon's widow fled inside in terror with the rest of them.

"The long – snouted monk's killed my son now," she howled, and on hearing this the prince led the dragon grandsons out to fight, wielding his crescent – bladed halberd. Pig raised his rake to parry the halberd and fought a fighting retreat till he jumped out of the water. The Great Sage Equaling Heaven and the seven sworn brothers all leapt into the fray, thrusting furiously with sword and spear. One of the dragon grandsons was chopped up into mincemeat.

Seeing that things were going badly the prince rolled in front of the mountain, turned back into himself, spread his wings, and started circling around. Erlang then took his golden bow, fixed a silver pellet to it pulled it to its full extent, and fired it in the air. The monster pulled in its wings and swooped down to bite Erlang with the head that shot out from its waist. Erlang's slim dog leapt up, barked, and bit off the head, which dripped blood. The monster fled for his life in great pain, heading straight back for the Northern Sea. Pig wanted to go after him but Monkey stopped him.

"Don't chase him," he said. "Never corner a defeated enemy. Now the dog's bitten that head off I'm sure he'll be more dead than alive. I'm going to turn myself into his double. I want you to part the waters and chase me in there to find the princess and trick the treasure out of her."

"You don't have to chase him if you don't want to," said Erlang and his six sages, "but by letting a creature like that stay alive you are only creating trouble for the future." The nine – headed gory monsters that are still found today are its descendants.

Pig did as he was told and parted a way through the waters for Monkey, looking just like the monster, to flee with himself in noisy pursuit. They soon reached the dragon palace, where Princess Infinitely Sage asked,

"Why are you in such a state, prince?"

"Pig beat me," Monkey replied, "and chased me in here. I'm no match for him. Hide the treasures somewhere safe."

Not realizing in her alarm that he was an impostor, she fetched a golden casket from the rear palace that she gave to Monkey with the words: "This is the Buddha relic." Then she fetched a white jade box that she gave to Monkey saying, "This is the nine–lobed magic fungus. Hide the treasures away where they'll be safe while I fight two or three rounds with him to cover you. When the treasures are safe come and join in the fight."

Monkey then tucked the treasures into his clothes, rubbed his face, and turned back into himself. "Have a good look, princess," he said. "Am I really your husband?" As the princess made a desperate grab for the boxes Pig ran up and knocked her to the floor with a blow on the shoulder from his rake.

Chapter 63

The ancient dragon's widow was fleeing as Pig grabbed her and raised his rake to smash her. "Stop!" said Monkey. "Don't kill her! Keep her alive for when we go back to announce our victory at court." Pig then lifted her up out of the water while Monkey followed him to the bank with the two boxes.

"Thanks to your power and prestige, elder brother, we have recovered the treasures and wiped out the thieving devils," said Monkey.

"That was no credit of ours," said Erlang. "In the first place the king's good fortune equaled heaven, and in the second you worthy brothers showed your boundless powers."

The brothers then all said, "As you have now succeeded, Brother Monkey, we shall take our leave of you."

Monkey expressed his thanks profusely and tried to persuade them to go to see the king. None of them agreed, and they led their forces back to Guankou.

Monkey carried the boxes and Pig dragged the dragon wife back to the city in next to no time, travelling by cloud and mist. The liberated monks of the Golden Light Monastery were waiting for them outside

the city, and when they saw the two of them suddenly alight from the clouds, they went up and kowtowed, ushering them into the city. The king was then sitting in the main hall of the palace talking with the Tang Priest.

A monk came ahead and took his courage in his hands to go in through the palace gates and report, "Your Majesty, Lords Monkey and Pig are back with one of the thieves and the treasures." The moment he heard this news the king hurried down from the throne hall to welcome them with the Tang Priest and Friar Sand. He was full of expressions of gratitude for their amazing achievement and he ordered a thanksgiving banquet.

"We don't need any drinks now," said Sanzang. "We can only feast when my disciples have returned the treasure to the pagoda." He then asked Monkey why it was that they were only back then as they had left the day before, Monkey then told him all about the battle with the prince, the death of the dragon king, meeting the True Lord Erlang, the defeat of the evil monsters and how he had got the treasures through trickery and transformation. Sanzang, the king and all the civil and military officials were delighted.

"Can the dragon wife talk in human speech?" the king then asked.

"Of course she knows human speech," Pig replied. "She was married to a dragon and had a lot of dragon sons and grandsons."

"In that case," said the king, "she'd better tell us the whole story of their crimes."

"I don't know anything about the theft of the Buddha relic," she said. "That was all done by that husband of mine, the dragon who's a ghost now, and our son—in—law the nine—headed monster. They knew that the light from your pagoda came from the Buddha relic that they stole under cover of the blood rain."

When asked how the magic fungus was stolen she answered, "My daughter the Infinitely Sage Princess sneaked into the Daluo Heaven and stole the Queen Mother's nine—lobed magic fungus from in front of the Hall of Miraculous Mist. The magic vapors of the fungus have nourished the relic, which will now be indestructible and shine for tens of thousands of years. Even if it's buried or put in a field it will give out thousands of beams of coloured light and auspicious vapors the moment it's brushed. You have now taken it back and killed my husband, all my sons, my son—in—law and my daughter. Please spare

my life."

"There'll be no mercy for you," Pig replied.

Chapter 63

"There's no such thing as a family that's all criminal," said Monkey. "I'll spare your life on one condition: you look after the pagoda for me for ever."

"A poor life is better than a good death," the dragon wife replied. "Spare my life and I'll do whatever you want." Monkey sent for an iron chain that was fetched by one of the aides.

He put it through the dragon wife's collarbone and said to Friar Sand, "Please ask the king to come and watch the treasures being put back in the pagoda."

The king then had his carriage prepared and left the court hand－in －hand with Sanzang, accompanied by the civil and military officials. He went to the Golden Light Monastery and climbed the pagoda, where the relic was placed in a precious vase on the thirteenth floor just under the roof. The dragon wife was chained to the central column of the pagoda. Spells were then said to summon the local deities and city gods of the capital and the Guardians of the monastery, who were ordered to bring the dragon wife food and drink once every three days to keep her alive. If she tried any tricks they were to execute her on the spot. The gods all secretly accepted their orders. Brother Monkey used the magic fungus to sweep out the thirteen stories of the pagoda one by one, then put it in the vase to look after the relic. Then and only then did the pagoda shine anew with coloured light and an auspicious glow that could be seen from all directions and admired by the countries all around.

When they came down out of the pagoda the king thanked them with the words, "If you, venerable Buddha, and your three Bodhisattvas had not come here this matter would never have been cleared up."

"Your Majesty," Monkey said, "Golden Light is not a good name as it's not something permanent. Gold can melt and light is only shining vapor. As we monks have gone to some trouble on your behalf we would like to change the name to Subdued Dragon Monastery. This

will ensure that you live for ever." The king ordered that the name be changed and a new board hung up that read.

NATION – PROTECTING

SUBDUED DRAGON MONASTERY

FOUNDED BY ROYAL COMMAND

He then commanded that a banquet be laid on and sent for painters to paint portraits of the four of them. Their names were recorded in the Tower of Five Phoenixes. The king then had his carriage brought out to see the Tang Priest and his disciples on their way. He tried to give them gold and jewels, but they firmly refused to accept anything. Indeed:

Evil had been wiped out;

Now calmness once more reigned.

Sunshine had been brought back,

The pagoda's light regained.

If you don't know what happened on the journey ahead listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 64

Wuneng Works Hard on Thorn Ridge

Sanzang Talks of Poetry in the Wood Immortals' Hermitage

The story has been told how the king of Jisai thanked Tang Sanzang and his three disciples for capturing the demons and pressed on them gold and jade, none of which they would accept. The king therefore told his aides to have made for each of them two suits of clothing like those they were wearing, two pairs of socks, two pairs of shoes and two belts. They were also provided with dry rations, and their passport was duly examined and returned. They were seen out of the city by a procession of carriages, the civil and military officials, the

common people of the city and the monks of the Subdued Dragon Monastery. There was also loud music. After six or seven miles they took their leave of the king, to be accompanied for a further six or seven miles by everyone else. Then all the others turned back except the monks of the Subdued Dragon Monastery, who were still with them after twenty miles. Some of the monks wanted to accompany them to the Western Heaven and the others wanted to cultivate their conduct and wait on them.

Seeing that none of them was willing to turn back Monkey decided to use his powers. He pulled out thirty or forty of his hairs, blew on them with magic breath, shouted, "Change!" and turned them into ferocious striped tigers that leapt roaring about on the path ahead. Only then were the monks scared into going back. The Great Sage then led the master as he whipped his horse forward and they were soon far away.

At this the monks began to weep aloud, shouting, "Kind and honorable sirs, fate must be against us since you won't take us with you."

Let us tell not of the wailing monks but of how the master and his three disciples headed along the main path West for a while before Monkey took his hairs back. Once again the seasons were changing, and it was now the end of winter and the beginning of spring, neither hot nor cold. As they were making their way along without a care they saw a long ridge in front of them over which the road led. Sanzang reined in his horse to look. He saw that the ridge was overgrown with brambles and creepers. Although the line of the path could be made out there were brambles and thorns all over it. "How are we going to manage that path, disciples?" he asked.

"No problem," Monkey replied.

"But, disciple, the path is covered with thorns. We could only manage it by crawling on our bellies like snakes or insects. Your backs will be bent with walking, and I'll never be able to ride the horse."

"There's nothing to worry about, Master," Pig replied. "I'll clear the thorns away with my rake. It'll be just like gathering up kindling for the fire. Never mind about riding your horse— —I promise we could even get up there in a carrying—chair."

"You are very strong," the Tang Priest replied, "but it is a long way and it will be hard. I don't know where you'll find the energy to do that distance: goodness only knows how far it is."

Chapter 64

"There's no need to guess," said Monkey. "I'll go and have a look." When he jumped up into the air he saw it stretching away endlessly. Indeed:

Vast was its size;

It was covered in mist and rain.

Soft was the carpet of grass on the path;

The mountain was covered in brilliant green.

New leaves were sprouting in dense abundance,

Fragrant creepers climbed all around.

When seen from afar no end was in sight;

From close to it seemed a mass of verdant cloud,

Luxuriant, mysterious and green.

The winds soughed everywhere

As the ridge shone bright in the sunshine.

There was pine and cypress and bamboo,

Many a plum and willow, and mulberry too.

Climbing figs coiled round ancient trees,

While creepers entwined the weeping poplars,

All twisted together like a frame,

Woven together in a bed.

Here the flowers made living brocade;

Far spread the scent of boundless blossom.

Everyone's life has brambles and thorns.

But none are as tall as those in the West.

Having looked for a long time, Monkey brought his cloud down and said, "Master, it's a very long way."

"How far?" Sanzang asked.

"I can't see any end to it," Monkey replied. "There must be at least three hundred miles of it."

"That's terrible," said Sanzang.

"Don't be miserable, Master," said Friar Sand with a laugh. "We know how to burn undergrowth. Set fire to it with a torch and all the thorns will be burned away. Then we'll be able to cross."

"Don't talk nonsense," Pig replied. "You can only clear the ground that way in November or later when the grass has withered and there are dead trees. The fire won't take otherwise. It'd never burn now, when everything's growing."

"Even if it did burn it would be terrifying," said Monkey.

"Then how are we to get across?" Sanzang asked.

"You'll just have to depend on me," said Pig with a grin.

The splendid idiot made a spell with his hands and said the words of it, leaned forward, and said, "Grow!" He grew two hundred feet tall, then waved the rake and shouted. "Change!" It became three hundred feet long.

Then he strode forward and wielded the rake two–handed to clear the undergrowth from both sides of the path. "Come with me, Master," he said. Sanzang was delighted to whip the horse along and follow close behind while Friar Sand carried the luggage and Monkey used his cudgel to help clear the way. They did not let their hands rest for a moment all day long, and they had covered over thirty miles when near nightfall they came to an empty stretch of ground where a stone tablet stood in the middle of the path.

On the tablet the words THORN RIDGE were written large, and under them two lines of smaller writing read,

"Two hundred and fifty miles of rampant thorns; few travelers have ever taken this road."

When Pig saw this he said with a laugh, "Let me add a couple more lines to that: 'Pig has always been good at removing thorns; he's cleared the roads right to the West.'" Sanzang then dismounted in a very good mood.

"Disciples," he said, "I've put you to a lot of trouble. Let's stop here for the night and carry on at first light tomorrow."

"Don't stop now, Master," said Pig with a smile. "It's a clear sky and we're in the mood. It's all right if we carry on all bloody night." The venerable elder had to accept his suggestion.

While Pig was working so hard in the lead all four of them pressed ahead without stopping for the night and another day until it was evening once more. In front—of them the trees and undergrowth were densely tangled and the wind could be heard rustling in the bamboos and soughing in the pines. Luckily they came to another patch of empty land where there stood an old temple outside whose gates pine and cypress formed a solid green shade, while peach and plum trees rivaled each other in beauty. Sanzang then dismounted and went with his three disciples to examine it. This is what they saw:

Before the cliff an ancient shrine stood by a cold stream;

Desolation hung all around the hill.

White cranes in the thickets made the moon seem brighter;

The green moss on the steps had been there for years.

The rustle of green bamboo seemed like human speech;

The remaining calls of the birds seemed expressions of grief.

Dogs and hens never came, and few human souls;

Wild flowers and plants grew all over the wall.

"This place strikes me as very sinister," said Monkey. "Let's not stay here long."

"You're being overcautious, brother," remarked Friar Sand. "As this is deserted and I don't think there are any monsters, wild beasts or fiends, there's nothing to be afraid of." No sooner were the words out of his mouth than there was a gust of sinister wind and an old man emerged from the temple gateway. He wore a turban, a pale −coloured gown and grass sandals, and he held a crooked stick. He was accompanied by a devil servant with a blue face, terrible fangs, red whiskers and a red body who was carrying on his head a tray of cakes.

"Great Sage," said the old man as they both knelt down, "I am the local god of Thorn Ridge. As I knew you were coming but had nothing better to offer you I have prepared this tray of steamed cakes for your master.

Do all have some. As there are no other houses for hundreds of miles I hope you will accept a few to stave off the pangs of hunger."

This was just what Pig wanted to hear: he went up and was just stretching out his hands to take a cake when Monkey, who had been taking a long, hard look at all this, shouted, "Stop! He's evil! Behave yourself!" He was now addressing the local god.

"You're no local god, trying to fool me like that. Take this!"

Seeing the ferocity of his attack, the local god turned round and transformed himself into a howling gust of negative wind that carried the venerable elder flying off through the air. Nobody knew where he had been taken. The Great Sage was desperate because he did not know where to look for the master, while Pig and Friar Sand stared at each other, pale with shock. Even the white horse was whinnying with fright. The three brother disciples and the horse were in utter confusion. They looked all around as far as they could see but without finding him.

We will not describe their search but tell how the old man and his devil servant carried Sanzang to a stone house that was wreathed in mist and gently set him down. Holding him by the hand and supporting him the old man said, "Don't be afraid, holy monk. We aren't bad people. I am the Eighteenth Lord of Thorn Ridge. I have asked you here on this cool, clear moonlit night to talk about poetry

and pass the time in friendship."

Only then did Sanzang calm down. When he took a careful look around this is what he saw: From where the banks of cloud set out

Stood a pure house for immortals, a place

To purify the self and refine elixir,

To plant groves of bamboo and grow one's flowers.

Cranes often came to the emerald cliff,

And frogs called in the pool's blue waters.

This was a match for the cinnabar furnace on Mount Tiantai,

And made one think of the sunsets at Mount Huashan.

Forget the vain effort of ploughing the clouds and fishing for the moon; Here there is admirable privacy and ease.

Sit here for long enough and your mind becomes sea – vast;

The rising moon can be half seen through the gauzy curtains.

As Sanzang was looking around and noticing how brightly the moon and the stars were shining he heard the sound of voices saying, "The Eighteenth Lord has brought the holy monk here." Sanzang looked up and saw three old men. The nearest one was white – haired and distinguished; the second one's temples had a green gloss and he was full of vigor; and the third had a pure heart and blue – black hair.

Their faces and clothes were all different, and they all came to bow to Sanzang, who returned their courtesy, saying, "I have done nothing to deserve this great affection you are showing for me."

To this the Eighteenth Lord replied with a smile, "We have long heard, holy monk, of how you have found the Way and we've long been waiting for the good fortune of meeting you that we have enjoyed today. I hope that you will not be grudge the pearls of your wisdom,

but will make yourself comfortable, sit and talk. Then we may learn about the true Dhyana teachings."

"May I ask the titles of the immortals?" Sanzang asked with a bow.

"The one with white hair," the Eighteenth Lord replied, "is known as the Lone Upright Lord; the one with green temples is Master Emptiness; and the one with a pure heart is the Ancient Cloud −toucher. My title is Energy."

"How old are you four venerable gentlemen?" Sanzang asked. To this the Lone Upright Lord replied,

"I am already a thousand years old;

I touch the sky and my leaves are always spring.

Elegant are my fragrant branches

Shaped like dragons and snakes;

My shadow is broken into many parts;

My body is covered in snow.

Since childhood I have stood firm and endured;

Now I am happy to cultivate the True.

The birds and phoenixes that perch are not mere mortal ones;

I am free and far from the dust of the normal world."

Master Emptiness spoke next with a smile:

"I've borne wind and frost for a thousand years,

Strong in my tall body and the vigor of my limbs.

In the still of the night comes the sound of raindrops,

And the shade spreads like a cloud in autumn sunlight.

My gnarled roots have the secret of eternal life;

I have been given the art of never aging.

Storks stay here and dragons, not common creatures:

I am green and full of life, as in immortals' land."

Then the Ancient Cloud—toucher said with a smile,

"Over a thousand autumns have I passed in emptiness;

Lofty is the view that grows ever purer.

Here there is no commotion, but eternal cool and calm;

I am full of spirit and have seen much frost and snow.

The seven worthies come to talk about the Way;

I sing and drink with my friends, the six men of leisure.

Chapter 64

886

Journey to the West

Lightly beating the jade and the gold

My nature is one with heaven; I roam with immortals."

Then Energy, the Eighteenth Lord, smiled as he said,

"My age is also over a thousand,

I am hoary, pure and natural.

Rain and dew give admirable vigor;

I borrow the creative power of heaven and earth.

Alone I flourish in ravines of wind and mist,

Relaxed and at my ease through all four seasons.

Under my green shade immortals stay

For chess and music and books on the Way."

"All four of you immortals have lived to most advanced ages." Sanzang said, "and the old gentleman Energy is over a thousand. You are ancient, you have found the Way, you are elegant and you are pure. Are you not the Four Brilliant Ones of Han times?"

"You flatter us too much," said the four old men. "We're not the Four Brilliant Ones: we're the four from deep in the mountains. May we ask, worthy monk, what your illustrious age is?" Sanzang put his hands together and replied,

"Forty years ago I left my mother's womb,

Fated to disaster since before my birth.

Escaping with my life I floated in the waves

Until I reached Jinshan where I renewed my body.

I nourished my nature and studied the sutras,

Sincere in worship of the Buddha, not wasting time.

Now that His Majesty has sent me to the West,

I am deeply honoured by you ancient immortals."

The four ancients then praised him, saying, "Holy monk, you have followed the Buddha's teaching since you left your mother's womb. By cultivating your conduct from childhood you have become a lofty monk who has found the Way. We are very happy to see you and would like to ask you to teach us. Could you possibly tell us the rudiments of the Dhyana dharma? It would be a great comfort to us." When the venerable elder heard this he was not at all alarmed, and this is what he said to them:

"Dhyana is silence; the dharma is that which saves. Silent salvation can only come through enlightenment.

Enlightenment is washing the mind and cleansing it of care, casting

off the vulgar and leaving worldly dust.

Human life is hard to obtain; it is hard to be born in the central lands; and the true dharma is hard to find.

There is no greater good fortune than to have all three. The wonderful Way of perfect virtue is subtle and imperceptible. Only with it can the six sense－organs and the six forms of consciousness be swept away.

Wisdom is this: there is no death and no life, no excess and no deficiency, emptiness and matter are all included, holy and secular both dismissed. It has mastered the tools of the Taoist faith and is aware of the methods of Sakyamuni. It casts the net of phenomena and smashes nirvana. Perception within perception is needed, enlightenment within enlightenment, then a dot of sacred light will protect everything. Light the raging fire to illuminate the Saha realm; it alone is revealed throughout the dharma world. Being utterly subtle it is firmer than ever: who crosses the pass of mystery through verbal persuasion? From the beginning I cultivated the Dhyana of great awareness: I was fated and determined to attain enlightenment."

The four elders listened with cocked ears and were filled with boundless joy. Each of them kowtowed and was converted to the truth, saying with bows of gratitude, "Holy monk, you are the very root of the enlightenment to be found through Dhyana meditation."

The Ancient Cloud－toucher said, "Dhyana may be silence, and the dharma may well save, but it is necessary for the nature to be settled and the mind sincere. If one is a true immortal of great awareness one has to sit in the Way of no－life. Our mysteries are very different."

"The Way is not fixed; its form and function are one. How is yours different?" Sanzang asked. To this the Ancient Cloud－toucher replied with a smile:

"We have been firm from birth: our forms and functions are different from yours. We were born in response to heaven and earth and grew through the rain and the dew. Proudly we laugh at wind and frost; we wear out the days and nights. Not one leaf withers, and all our branches are full of firm resolve. What I say has no emptiness about it, but you cling to your Sanskrit. The Way was China's in the first place and only later looked for more evidence in the West. You are wearing out your straw sandals for nothing: you don't know what you are looking for. You are like a stone lion cutting out its own heart, or a fox salivating so hard it digests the marrow of its own bones. If in

your meditation you forget your roots you will pursue the Buddha's reward in vain. Your words are as tangled as the brambles on our Thorn Ridge and as confused as the creepers. How can we accept a gentleman such as you? How can one like you be approved and taught? You must reexamine your present state and find a life of freedom in stillness. Only then can you learn to raise water in a bottomless basket, and make the rootless iron－tree flower. On the peak of the Miraculous Treasure Chapter 64

my feet stand firm; I return to the assembly at Longhua.

When Sanzang heard this he kowtowed in thanks, and the Eighteenth Lord and the Lone Upright Lord helped him back to his feet, Master Emptiness said with a chuckle, "Cloud－toucher's remarks revealed things a little too clearly. Please get up, holy monk: you don't have to believe every word of it. We didn't intend to use the light of the moon for serious discussions. We should chant poems, feel free, and let ourselves relax."

"If we're going to recite poems," said Cloud－toucher with a smile, pointing towards the stone house, "why don't we go into the hermitage and drink some tea?"

Sanzang answered with a bow and went over to look at the hermitage, above which was written in large letters TREE IMMORTALS' HERMITAGE. They all then went inside and decided where to sit, whereupon the red devil servant appeared with a tray of China－root cakes and five bowls of fragrant tea. The four old men urged Sanzang to eat some cakes, but he was too suspicious to do so, and would not take any till the four old men had all eaten some: only then did he eat a couple. After they had drunk some tea it was cleared away. Sanzang then stole a careful look around and saw that everything was of a delicate and intricate beauty in the moonlight:

Where waters flowed beside the rocks,

And fragrant scents from the flowers curled,

The scene was one of cultured peace,

Free from the dust of a lower world.

Sanzang took great pleasure in gazing on this sight: he felt happy, relaxed and exhilarated. He found himself saying a line of poetry: "The dhyana heart revolves in moonlike purity."

The couplet was completed by Energy, who said with a smile: "Poetic inspiration is fresher than the sky."

To this Lone Upright added: "By grafting on each line embroidery grows."

Then Emptiness said: "Pearls come when naturally the writing flows."

Cloud–toucher continued: "The glory is now over: Six Dynasties disappear. The *Songs* are redivided to make distinctions clear."

"I shouldn't have let those silly words slip out just now," said Sanzang, "I was only rambling. Really, I am a beginner trying to show off in front of experts. Having heard you immortals talk in that fresh and free–ranging way I now know that you old gentlemen are true poets."

"Don't waste time in idle chat," said Energy. "A monk should take things through to the end. You started the verse, so why don't you finish it? Please do so at once."

"I can't," Sanzang replied. "It would be much better if you completed it for me, Eighteenth Lord."

"That's very nice of you, I must say!" commented Energy. "You started the verse so you can't refuse to finish it. It's wrong to be so stingy with your pearls." Sanzang then had no choice but to add a final couplet:

"Waiting for the tea lying pillowed in the breeze,

Spring is in the voice now that the heart's at ease."

"I like 'Spring is in the voice now that the heart's at ease,'" said the Eighteenth Lord.

To this Lone Upright replied, "Energy, you have a deep understanding of poetry, and spend all your time savoring its delights. Why don't you compose another poem for us?"

The Eighteenth Lord generously did not refuse. "Very well then," he replied, "let's make up chain couplets.

Each person has to start his couplet with the last word of the couplet before. I'll lead off: Without spring's glory there would be no winter's death;

Clouds come and mists depart as if existing not."

"Let me tack another couple more lines on," Master Emptiness said.

"Not any breath of wind to rock the spreading shade;

Visitors enjoy the Wealth and Long Life picture."

Cloud–toucher now joined in with his couplet:

"Picture it like the strong old man of the Western hills, Pure as the hermit of the South, the heartless man."

Lone Upright added his two lines:

"The man is a roof–beam as he has side–leaves

To build the office of the censorate."

When Sanzang heard all this he could only sigh and say, "Indeed, your superb poems have a noble spirit that rises up to the heavens. Despite my lack of talent I would like to add a couplet to that."

"Holy monk," said Lone Upright, "you are one who has found the Way and a man of great cultivation. You need not add another couplet. Instead you can give us a whole verse so that we can try as best we can to match the rhyme pattern." Sanzang had no choice but to recite the following regulated verse with a smile:

"Travelling West with my staff to visit the Dharma King

I seek the wonderful scriptures to spread them far and wide.

The golden magic fungus blesses the poetry circle;

Under the trees is the scent of a thousand flowers.

One must go higher from the top of a hundred – foot pole,

Leaving one's traces in ten regions' worlds.

Cultivate the jade image and majestic body:

Before the gate of bliss is the monastery."

When the four old men had heard this they were full of high praise for it. "Although I'm stupid and untalented," the Eighteenth Lord said, "I'll take my courage in both hands and try to match your rhymes:
Vigorous and proud, I smile as king of the trees:

Not ever the tree of heaven can match my fame.

A dragon and snake shadow for a thousand feet in the mountains; The spring has flowed for a thousand years with its amber fragrance.

My spirit is at one with heaven and earth:

I gladly cover my traces in the wind and rain.

Chapter 64

Now I am old I regret having no immortal bones

And rely on China – root alone to maintain my years."

"That poem started off heroically, and the next couplet had some strength," said the Lone Upright Lord. "But the last line was too modest. Admirable! Most admirable! Let me try rhyming one too:

"I happily give a perch in the frost to the king of the birds; My talent is displayed before the Hall of Four Perfections.

The pearly tassels of heavy dew obscure the green carpet;

In the light breeze stone teeth crush chilly fragrance.

A delicate voice intones in the corridor at night;

Pale autumn shadows are put away in the ancient hall.

I used to be offered for long life at the New Year;

In old age I stand proudly on the mountain."

"What a fine poem, what a fine poem," said Master Emptiness. "Truly, the moon was working together with heaven to write it. How could such a clumsy fool as I am hope to match its rhymes? But I must try to patch a few lines together: I don't want to waste this chance:"

"The timber of roofbeams is close to kings;

Its fame is spread in the Palace of Great Purity.

The sunlit hall seems filled with azure blue;

Green fragrance always pervades the dark wall.

Strong, cold and ancient in my beauty,

My roots go down to the Underworld's nine springs.

My spreading shade gives cover like cold clouds.

I don't compete in prettiness with flowers."

Chapter 64

"You three gentlemen's poems," said Cloud–toucher, "are elegant and pure, like a whole sackful of embroidery and brocades being opened out. Although I have neither strength nor talent you three gentlemen have removed the block for me. If you insist I'll put a few lines of doggerel together. I hope they won't make you laugh:

In the bamboo grove I delight wise kings;

A hundred acres of me by the Wei brings fame.

My green skin is naturally marked by the tears of the Xiang Goddess;
My scaly shoots pass on the scent of history.

My leaves will never change their color in frost;

The beauty of my misty twigs can never be concealed.

Few have understood me since the death of Wang Huizhi;

Since ancient times I have been known through brush and ink.

"You venerable immortals have all composed poems like phoenixes breathing out pearls," Sanzang said.

"There is nothing I can add. I am deeply moved by the great favour you have shown me. But it is late now and I do not know where my three disciples are waiting for me. I cannot stay any longer, and I must start finding my way back. I am profoundly grateful for your boundless love. Could you show me my way back?"

"Don't be so worried, holy monk," replied the four ancients, laughing. "An encounter like this is rare in a thousand years. The sky is fresh and clear, and the moon makes the night as bright as day. Relax and sit here for a little longer. At dawn we shall see you across the ridge. You will certainly meet your distinguished disciples."

As they were talking in came two serving maids in blue, each carrying a lantern of crimson silk. Behind them followed a fairy who was holding a sprig of apricot blossom as she greeted them with a smile. What did the fairy look like?

Her hair had the green of jade,

Her face was pinker than rouge.

Her starry eyes were full of light and color;

Her elegant eyebrows were like moth antennae.

She wore a red skirt with plum – blossom designs;

And a light jacket of gray shot with red.

Her curved shoes were shaped like phoenix beaks,

And her silk stockings were marked with mud.

This witch was as lovely as the woman on Tiantai,

No less a beauty than the Zhou king's concubine.

"To what do we owe the pleasure of your visit, Apricot Fairy?" the old man asked as they bowed to her.

Returning their bows she replied, "I hear that you have a distinguished guest here and are exchanging poems with him. May I meet him?"

"Here he is," said the Eighteenth Lord, pointing him out. "You don't need to ask." Sanzang bowed to her but dared say nothing.

"Bring in the tea at once," she said. Two more serving girls in yellow, carried in a red lacquer tray on which were six fine porcelain tea—bowls with rare fruits in them and spoons lying across the top, as well as a copper—inlaid iron teapot in which was hot and fragrant tea. When the tea had been poured the woman showed glimpses of finger as delicate as spring onion shoots as she presented the porcelain bowls of it first to Sanzang and then to the four ancients. The last cup she kept for herself.

Only when Master Emptiness invited the Apricot Fairy to sit down did she do so. After they had drunk the tea she leant forward and said, "As you ancient immortals have been having so delightful an evening could you tell me some of the choicest lines you've composed?"

"Our stuff was just vulgar rubbish," Cloud—toucher replied. "But this holy monk's verses were truly superb examples of high Tang poetry."

"Please let me hear them if you will," the fairy said, whereupon the four ancients recited Sanzang's two poems and his exposition of the Dhyana dharma. The woman, whose face was all smiles, then said, "I'm completely untalented and shouldn't really be making a fool of myself like this, but hearing this wonderful lines is an opportunity too good to waste. Could I cobble together a verse in the second rhyme pattern?" She then recited these lines:

The Han Emperor Wu first made my name;

In Zhou times Confucius taught under my shade.

Dong Feng loved me so much he planted a wood of me;

Sun Chu once offered my jelly in sacrifice.

Soft is my pink and rain – fed beauty;

The misty green is shown and yet concealed.

When over – ripe I have a touch of sourness;

Each year I fall beside the fields of wheat."

When the four ancients heard the poem they were all full of admiration for it. "How elegant it is," they said,

"and how free of worldly dust. At the same time the lines have something of the awakening of spring in them.

'Soft is my pink and rain – fed beauty.' That's good. 'Soft is my pink and rain – fed beauty.'"

"You're too kind – – it quite alarms me," she replied. "The holy monk's lines that I heard just now were like brocade from the heart or embroidery in words. Could you be generous with your pearls and teach me one of those verses?" The Tang Priest dared not reply.

The woman was evidently falling for him and moving closer and closer, pressing herself against him and whispering to him, "Noble guest, let's make the most of this wonderful night for love. What are we waiting for? Life is short."

"The Apricot Fairy admires you completely, holy monk," said the Eighteenth Lord. "You must feel something for her. If you don't find her adorable you have very poor taste."

"The holy monk is a famous gentleman who has found the Way," said the Lone Upright Lord, "and he wouldn't possibly act in a way that was at all improper. It would be quite wrong of us to do things like that. To ruin his reputation and honour would be a very mean thing to do. If the Apricot Fairy is willing Cloud – toucher and the Eighteenth Lord can act as matchmakers while Master Emptiness and I act as the guarantors of the wedding. It would be excellent if they married."

Hearing this Sanzang turned pale with horror, jumped to his feet and shouted at the top of his voice, "You're all monsters, trying to lead me astray like that. There was nothing wrong with talking about the

mysteries of the Way with well–honed arguments, but it's disgraceful of you to try to ruin a monk like me by using a woman as a bait." Seeing how angry Sanzang was they all bit their fingers in fear and said nothing more.

But the red devil servant exploded with thunderous fury, "You don't know how honoured you're being, monk.

What's wrong with my sister? She's beautiful and charming. Her needlework aside, her gift for poetry alone would make her more than a match for you. What do you mean, trying to turn her down? You're making a terrible mistake. The Lone Upright Lord's idea was quite right. If you're not prepared to sleep with her on the quiet I'll marry the two of you properly."

Sanzang went paler still with shock. None of their arguments, however outrageous, had the slightest impact on him. "We've been talking to you very nicely, monk," the devil servant said, "but you don't pay the slightest attention. If we lose our tempers and start our rough, country way of doing things we'll drag you off and see to it that you can never be a monk any longer or ever marry a wife. After that your life will be pointless."

The venerable elder's heart remained as hard as metal or stone and he obdurately refused to do as they asked, wondering all the time where his disciples were looking for him. At the thought his tears flowed unquenchably. Smiling and sitting down next to him the woman produced a silk handkerchief from her emerald sleeve with which she wiped away his tears.

Chapter 64

"Don't be so upset, noble guest," She said. "You and I are going to taste the pleasures of love." Sanzang jumped up and shouted at her to go away and would have left at once if they had not held him there by force.

The row went on till daybreak.

Suddenly Sanzang heard a call of, "Master! Master! We can hear you. Where are you?" Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand had been searching everywhere all night, leading the white horse and carrying the

baggage. They had gone through all the thorns and brambles without a moment's rest and by now had reached the Western side of the 250－mile－wide cloud－capped Thorn Ridge, This was the shout they gave when they heard Sanzang's angry yells. Sanzang broke free, rushed outside, and called, "Wukong, I'm here. Help! Help!" The four ancients, the devil servant, the woman and her maids all disappeared in a flash.

A moment later Pig and Friar Sand were there too. "How ever did you get here, Master?" they asked.

"Disciples," said Sanzang, clinging to Monkey, "I have put you to a lot of trouble. I was carried here by the old man who appeared last night and said he was a local deity bringing us vegetarian food－－the one you shouted at and were going to hit. He held my hand and helped me inside that door there, where I saw three old men who had come to meet me. They kept calling me 'holy monk' and talked in a very pure and elegant way.

They were marvellous poets, and I matched some verses with them. Then at about midnight a beautiful woman came with lanterns to see me and made up a poem herself. She kept calling me 'noble guest'. She liked the look of me so much she wanted to sleep with me. That brought me to my senses. When I refused they offered to be matchmakers and guarantors, and to marry us. I swore not to agree and was just shouting at them and trying to get away when to my surprise you turned up. Although they were still dragging at my clothes they suddenly disappeared. It must have been because it was dawn and because they were frightened of you too."

"Did you ask them their names when you were talking about poetry?"

Monkey asked. "Yes," Sanzang replied, "I asked them their titles. The oldest was Energy, the Eighteenth Lord; the next oldest was the Lone Upright Lord; the third was Master Emptiness; and the fourth the Ancient Cloud－toucher. They called the woman Apricot Fairy."

"Where are they?" Pig asked, "where've they gone?"

"Where they have gone I don't know," Sanzang replied, "but where we talked about poetry was near here."

When the three disciples searched with their master they found a rock－face on which were carved the words

"Tree Immortals' Hermitage."

"This is it," said Sanzang, and on looking carefully Brother Monkey saw a big juniper, an old cypress, an old pine and an old bamboo. Behind the bamboo was a red maple. When he took another look by the rock – face he saw an old apricot tree, two winter – flowering plums, and two osman – thuses.

"Did you see the evil spirits?" Monkey asked.

"No," said Pig.

"It's just because you don't realize that those trees have become spirits," said Monkey.

"How can you tell that the spirits were trees?" Pig asked.

Chapter 64

"The Eighteenth lord is the pine," Monkey replied, "the Lone Upright Lord the cypress, Master Emptiness the juniper and the Ancient Cloud – toucher the bamboo. The maple there was the red devil and the Apricot Fairy that apricot tree."

When Pig heard this he ruthlessly hit with his rake and rooted with his snout to knock the plum, osmanthus, apricot and maple trees over, and as he did blood flowed from their roots. "Wuneng," said Sanzang, going up to him to check him, "don't harm any more of them. Although they have become spirits they did me no harm.

Let's be on our way again."

"Don't be sorry for them, Master," said Monkey. "They'll do people a great deal of harm if we let them develop into big monsters." With that the idiot let fly with his rake and knocked pine, cypress, juniper ad bamboo all to the ground. Only then did he invite his master to remount and carry along the main route to the West.

If you don't know what happened as they pressed ahead, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 65

A Demon Creates a False Thunder Peak

All Four Pilgrims Meet with Disaster

The cause and effect this time revealed

Should make one do what's good and shun the evil.

Once a thought is born

The Intelligence is aware of it.

And lets it become action.

Why strive to learn stupidity or skill?

Both are medicines for heartlessness.

Do what is right while you are still alive;

Do not just drift.

Recognize the root and the source,

Escape from the trunk and the husk.

If seeking long life you must grasp this.

Watch clearly at every moment,

Refine your thoughts.

Go through the three passes, fill up the black sea;

The good will surely ride on the phoenix and crane.

Then your gloom will change to compassion

As you ascend to absolute bliss.

Tang Sanzang's thoughts were so pure that not only did the heavenly gods protect him: even the vegetable spirits had taken him along a part of his journey for a night of elegant conversation, thereby saving him from having to go through the thorns and brambles. Nor were

there any more creepers to entangle them. As the four of them carried on West for another long period winter ended and spring returned.

All things begin to flower,

The handle of the Dipper returns to the East.

Everywhere the grass is green,

As are the leaves of willows on the bank.

The ridge covered in peach blossom is red brocade;

The mist over the stream is a translucent gauze.

Frequent wind and rain,

Unbounded feeling.

Flowers open their hearts to the sun,

Swallows carry off the delicate moss.

Wang Wei should have painted the beauty of the mountains;

The birdsong is as persuasive as Su Qin's golden tongue.

Though no one sees these fragrant cushions of flowers

The butterflies and singing bees adore them.

Master and disciples made their way across the flowers and the grass ambling along with the horse until they made out in the distance a mountain so high that it touched the sky. Pointing at it with his riding crop Sanzang Chapter 65

said, "I wonder how high that mountain is, Wukong. It touches the heavens and pierces the firmament."

"Isn't there some ancient poem that says, 'Heaven alone is supreme: no mountain can equal its height?'"

Monkey replied. "However high a mountain is it can't possibly join up with the sky."

"Then why's Mount Kunlun called the pillar of heaven?" Pig asked.

"Evidently you don't know that part of the sky has always been missing in the Northwest," Brother Monkey replied. "As Kunlun's in the Northwest corner it plugs that hole in the sky. That's why it's called the pillar of heaven."

"Brother," said Friar Sand with a smile, "stop telling him all that. He'll brag about it to make himself superior.

We'll know how high the mountain is when we've climbed it."

The idiot started chasing Friar Sand and brawling with him in a playful way, and the master's horse galloped as if on wings. They were soon at the foot of a precipice up which they made their way painfully slowly. This is what the mountain was like:

The wind rustling in the woods,

Water gushing along the beds of ravines.

Crows and sparrows cannot fly across it;

Even gods and immortals find it hard.

Scars and gullies endlessly twisting;

Clouds of dust blowing where no one can go;

Rocks in strange and fascinating shapes.

Clouds like vast expanses of water,

While elsewhere birds sing in the trees.

Deer carry magic fungus in their mouths.

Apes pick peaches.

Foxes and raccoon dogs spring around on the cliffs,

Large and small deer play on the ridge.

Then comes the spine—chilling roar of a tiger,

And the way is blocked by leopards and wolves.

Chapter 65

Sanzang was terrified by what he saw, but Monkey's powers were enormous. With his gold – banded cudgel and a mighty roar he sent the wolves, tigers, leopards and other wild beasts running then cleared the way for the master to reach the top of the mountain. Once they were over the summit ridge and had started going down the gentle Western slope they saw divine light and coloured clouds over some imposing buildings from which came the muffled sounds of bells and stone chimes.

"Look and see what that place is, disciples," said Sanzang. Monkey raised his head, shaded his eyes with his hands, and on careful examination saw that it was a fine place: Magnificent architecture,

A famous monastery.

The valley of emptiness is full of the earth's vibrations;

Heavenly fragrance pervades the stillness.

Rain in the bluish pines obscures the buildings;

Mist around the green bamboo protects the preaching hall.

Through coloured clouds one can make out the dragon palace;

The infinite worlds are seen in shimmering light.

Red balustrades and doors of marble,

Painted and carved beams.

Incense fills the hall in which the scriptures are taught;

The moon hangs over the window where the mysteries are passed on.

Birds sing in red trees,

Cranes drink from a spring in the rocks.

The flowers as fine as those of the Jetavana;

All the doors open on the brilliance of Sravasti.

Beside the towering buildings the gates face crags;

Slow is the rhythm of the bell and chime.

A light breeze blows into open windows,

And under the rolled – up curtains is a smoky haze.

Chapter 65

900

Journey to the West

Among the monks emotions are all calm;

Peace reigns in the absence of worldliness.

A land of immortals unsullied by earth's dust,

This splendid monastery of the pure land.

When he had taken a good look at it Monkey went back to report, "It's a monastery, Master, but for some reason there's something evil about the auspicious dhyana atmosphere. The place looks like the Thunder Monastery but the distance to here is wrong. Whatever we do we mustn't go rushing inside. If we do we may run into something nasty."

"But if it looks like the Thunder Monastery this must surely be the Vulture Peak," said the Tang Priest. "Don't try to frustrate my sincerest wish and put off what I've come for."

"But it isn't vulture peak," said Monkey. "I've been there several times and this isn't the way."

"Even if it isn't there must be good people living here," said Pig.

"Don't be so suspicious," said Friar Sand. "The road goes straight past the gate, so we can find out at a glance,"

"You're right," said Monkey.

Whipping on the horse, the venerable elder arrived at the monastery gate, above which the words THUNDER

MONASTERY were written.

This came as such a surprise to him that he fell to the ground from the horse, saying abusively, "Wretched macaque! You'll be the death of me. Here we are at the Thunder Monastery and you're still trying to trick me."

"Don't be angry, Master," said Monkey with a forced smile. "Take another look. There are three words over the gate. Why did you only read two of them out, then get angry with me?" Still shaking, the master climbed to his feet again for another look and saw that there were in fact three words written there: LESSER

THUNDER MONASTERY.

"Even if it is the Lesser Thunder Monastery," Sanzang said, "there must be a Buddha in here. The three thousand Buddhas of whom the scriptures speak can't all live in the same place, just as the Bodhisattva Guanyin lives in the Southern Sea, Samantabhadra lives on Mount Emei and Manjusri on Mount Wutai. I wonder which Buddha's holy seat this is. As the saying has it, Wherever there's a Buddha there are scriptures;

Everywhere you go you'll find some treasures.

Let's go in."

Chapter 65

"No, we mustn't," said Monkey. "This place looks thoroughly sinister. Don't blame me if this leads to disaster."

"Even if there is not Buddha here there's bound to be a statue of a Buddha, and I am under a vow to worship every Buddha statue I pass," Sanzang replied. "I won't blame you." He then told Pig to get out his cassock, put on his mitre, neatened his clothes up and strode forward.

As he did so a voice from inside the gate called out, "Tang Priest, you've come from the East to worship our Buddha, so why are you still being so casual about it?" Sanzang at once started kowtowing, as did Pig while Friar Sand knelt. The Great Sage hung back, holding the horse and looking after the luggage. Once they were inside the inner gates they reached the Buddha Hall, outside of which were drawn up the five hundred arhats, the three thousand protectors, the four

vajrapanis, the eight Bodhisattvas, nuns, lay people, and countless holy monks and lay brothers. Everywhere was the scent of flowers and auspicious vapors. The venerable elder, Pig and Friar Sand were all so overwhelmed that they kowtowed at every step until they reached the hall. Monkey alone did not bow.

"Sun Wukong," came a shrill shout from the throne, "why don't you kowtow when you see the Buddha?"

Nobody realized that Monkey had spotted as he took a careful look around that this was all false.

Letting go of the horse and putting down the luggage he shouted as he brandished his cudgel, "Evil beasts!

What a nerve! How dare you try to ruin the Buddha's good name by pretending to be him! Stay where you are!" He raised his cudgel in both hands and was just about to strike when a pair of bronze cymbals came out of the sky to join together with a mighty crash, enclosing him completely from head to toe. Pig and Friar Sand grabbed desperately for their rake and staff, only to be so closely surrounded by the arhats, protectors, holy monks and lay brothers that they could not move. They and Sanzang too were all captured and roped up tightly.

Now the Buddha on the lotus throne was a demon king and all the arhats and others his little devils. They now put off their Buddha disguises, so that they looked once more like the evil creatures they really were, and carried the three of them round to the back to be kept under guard while Monkey was sealed inside the cymbals, never to be released. The cymbals were then set on a pedestal, and here he was to be turned to pus and blood within three days and nights, after which the other three were to be steamed in an iron steamer and eaten. Indeed:

The green – eyed macaque saw that it was false;

The dhyana monk worshipped the appearance of the Buddha.

The yellow – wife blindly joined in the prostration,

While the mother of wood foolishly agreed.

The monsters used force to oppress the true nature;

Evilly the demon king mistreated the holy man.

The demon king was greater than the narrow Way;

Chapter 65

By taking the wrong course they threw away their lives.

Having locked the Tang Priest and his two disciples away and tied the horse up at the back they put Sanzang's cassock and mitre back into the luggage and stored that away too. They then put everything under a close guard.

Inside the cymbals Monkey found it pitch black and so hot that he was soon pouring with sweat. Push and shove though he might, there was no way he could get out, and when in desperation he hit out wildly all around with his iron cudgel he could not move the cymbals by even a fraction of an inch. Then he made a hand–spell that made him ten thousand feet tall; the cymbals grew with him. There was not a crack anywhere through which a chink of light could get in. He made another hand–spell to make himself smaller and shrank till he was as tiny as a mustard–seed. The cymbals shrank with him, and still there was no hole.

He blew a magic breath on the iron cudgel, said, "Change!" and made it into a flagpole with which to prop the cymbals up. Then he pulled two of the longer hairs from the back of his head, blew on them, said, "Change!"

and turned them into a five–part drill with a plum–blossom shaped bit which he turned a thousand times or more. There was a rasping noise but the drill made no impression.

By now he was feeling desperate, so he made another handspell and recited the words, *"Om ram* peaceful dharma world; eternal keen purity of the heavenly unity."

This compelled the Five Protectors, the Six Dings, the Six Jias and the Eighteen Guardians of the Faith to gather round the cymbals and say, "Great Sage, we are all protecting your master and keeping the demons from harming him, so why do you call us here?"

"If he dies it serves him right for ignoring my advice," Monkey replied. "You lot had better find some magic to get these cymbals open at once

and have me out of here so I can decide what to do. It's completely dark in here, I'm feeling very hot, and it's so stuffy it'll kill me." The gods all tried to lift the cymbals, but as before it was impossible to move them by even a fraction of an inch.

"Great Sage," said the Gold-headed Protector, "goodness only knows what kind of treasure this is, but they're all of a piece from top to bottom. We gods aren't strong enough to move them."

"And I've lost count of the number of my magic powers I've used here without being able to move them either," said Monkey. When the Protector heard this he told the Six Dings to look after Monkey and the Six Jias to watch over the cymbals while the guardians kept their eyes on what was happening all around.

He then set off on his beam of auspicious light and a moment later shot in through the Southern Gate of Heaven, where he did not wait to be summoned but rushed straight to the steps of the Hall of Miraculous Brightness to prostrate himself before the Jade Emperor and report, "My sovereign, I am one of the Protectors of the Four Quarters and the Centre. The Great Sage Equaling Heaven who is escorting the Tang Priest on the journey to fetch the scriptures has now reached a mountain with a monastery called the Lesser Thunder Monastery on it. The Tang Priest went in to worship under the illusion that he had reached Vulture Peak, but it turned out that the whole thing was a decoy to trap them. The Great Sage is caught inside a pair of cymbals and can't go anywhere. He's gradually dying. That is what I have come to report." At once the Jade Emperor ordered that the Twenty-eight Constellations be sent to rescue them and defeat the demons.

Chapter 65

Not daring to delay for a moment, the constellations went out through the gate of Heaven with the Protector and were soon inside the monastery. It was now the second of the night's five watches, and all the demons, senior and junior, had gone to sleep after the feast their king had given them to celebrate the Tang priest's capture. Doing nothing to disturb them, the constellations went to the cymbals and reported, "Great Sage, we're the Twenty-eight Constellations. The Jade Emperor has sent us here to rescue you." The news made Monkey

very happy. "Smash them open with your weapons and get me out of here."

"We don't dare to," the constellations replied. "This is pure gold and if we hit it the noise would wake the devils up and it would be impossible to rescue you. We'll have to try to work it open with our weapons. The moment you see a chink of light in there, out you come."

"Yes," said Monkey. They used their spears, swords, sabers and battle-axes to try to lever, prise, lift, and force it open, but despite all their efforts the third watch came and still they had failed to make the slightest impression on them. It was as if the cymbals had been cast as a single whole. Not a chink of light could Monkey see from inside, no matter how hard he looked and crawled and rolled all around.

Then the Metal Dragon of the constellation Gullet said, "Don't get impatient, Great Sage. This must be an As-You-Will treasure and I'm sure it can be changed. You feel where the cymbals join from the inside. Once I get my horn between them you can turn yourself into something and get out where I've loosened them."

Monkey followed this suggestion and felt frantically around inside. Meanwhile the constellation made himself so small that his horn was no bigger than the point of a needle. He pushed hard with it where the two cymbals joined, and by exerting tremendous pressure he managed to penetrate inside.

He then gave himself a magic body by saying, "Grow! Grow! Grow!" The horn became as thick as a rice-bowl, but the cymbals were more like creatures of skin and flesh than objects cast from metal: they kept their close bite on the Metal Dragon of Gullet's horn, and not a crack appeared anywhere around.

"It's no use," said Monkey, feeling the constellation's horn, "it's not at all loose anywhere around it. There's nothing for it: you'll have to bear the pain and pull me out." The splendid Great Sage then changed his gold-banded cudgel into a steel gimlet, bored a hole in the tip of the horn, made himself the size of a mustard seed, crawled into the hole, squatted there, and shouted, "Pull it out." Only through stupendous efforts did the constellation manage to pull his horn out, which left him so weak and exhausted that he collapsed.

Monkey then crawled out of the hole in the horn again, resumed his own appearance, raised his cudgel and smashed the cymbals apart

with a tremendous noise like a copper mountain collapsing. The Buddhist instruments now lay shattered into thousands of fragments of gold. This gave the Twenty – eight Constellations a terrible fright and made the Protectors' hair stand on end. All the devils woke up, and as the demon king was shocked out of his sleep he jumped up, pulled on his clothes and had the drums beaten to muster all the demons with their weapons. By now it was nearly dawn and they all gathered round the throne. On seeing Monkey and the constellations standing in a ring round the fragments of the golden cymbals the demon king went pale from shock and ordered his underlings to shut the front gates and not let them escape.

As soon as Monkey heard this he led the Twenty – eight Constellations to spring up on their clouds till they were above the ninth heaven, while the demon king had the fragments of gold tidied away and drew his devilish forces up outside the monastery gates.

In his anger the king had no choice but to put on his armor, take his short and flexible wolf's – tooth spiked mace and come out of his camp shouting, "Sun the Novice! A real man doesn't run away from a fight. Come back and fight three rounds with me." This was more than Monkey could stand, and he landed his cloud at the head of his starry host to see what the evil spirit looked like.

Chapter 65

This is what he saw:

Matted hair

Held in place by a thin gold band;

Eyes flashing

Under a pair of frowning yellow brows;

A pear – shaped nose

With flaring nostrils;

A square – cut mouth

With sharp – pointed teeth.

He wore a coat of chain – mail

Tied with a tasseled raw silk sash;

On his feet were a pair of oxhide boots

And he carried a wolf's – tooth mace.

He looked both like a wild beast and at the same time not;

His face was human and yet not human.

"What kind of monster do you think you are?" shouted Monkey as he brandished his cudgel. "How can you have the effrontery to pose as a Buddha, occupy a mountain and create a false Lesser Thunder Monastery?"

"The only reason you've got the nerve to come rampaging around my magic mountain must be that you don't know my name," the monster said. "This is the Lesser Western Heaven, and Heaven has given me these fine buildings because I have cultivated my conduct and gained the true achievement. I am called the Yellow – browed Buddha, though in their ignorance the people around here call me King Yellow Brow or Lord Yellow Brow. I've known about your journey to the West for a very long time now and I have some magic powers, which was why I could create those illusions to lure your master in so that you and I could have a trial of strength. If you can beat me I'll spare your master and his disciples and allow you to fulfil your true achievement. But if you can't I'll kill the lot of you and go myself to see the Tathagata Buddha, fetch the scriptures and take them to China."

"You talk too much, evil spirit," said Monkey with a laugh. "If you want a trial of strength try this from my cudgel." With great pleasure the demon king parried it and a fine fight ensued: Chapter 65

A pair of cudgels,

Each quite different.

To start with what they looked like,

One was a short and flexible Buddha weapon,

The other was hard from the stores of the sea.

Both of them could be changed at will,

And today they met in a struggle for mastery.

The soft wolf's – tooth mace was adorned with brocade,

The hard gold – banded cudgel had dragon patterns.

They could both be admirably big or small,

Any length you liked and always just right.

Monkey and monster were evenly matched:

This fight between them was the real thing.

The monkey tamed by faith was now the mind – ape;

The evil monster had offended Heaven with deception.

In his anger and loathing neither showed mercy;

Both had their ways of being savagely vicious.

One struck to the head, never easing the pressure;

The other hit at the face and could not be fought off.

The sun went dark behind the clouds they made;

They breathed out mists that hid the towering crags.

Cudgel met cudgel as the rivals fought,

Both forgetting life and death for the Tang priest's sake.

The two of them fought fifty rounds without either emerging as victor. By the monastery gate there was much beating of drums and gongs as the evil spirits shouted their war – cries and waved their flags. Facing them were the heavenly soldiers of the Twenty – eight Constellations and the holy hosts of the Five Protectors, who were Chapter 65

all armed and shouting as they surrounded the demon king. The demons outside the monastery gate were too frightened to beat their drums, and their hands were shaking so badly that they could not strike their gongs.

The old demon king was not at all afraid. He held all the enemy troops at bay with his mace in one hand while with the other he undid an old white cotton pouch that was round his waist as a sash; this he threw into the air.

With a loud swish it caught the Great Sage Monkey, the Twenty −eight Constellations and the Protectors of the Four Quarters and the Centre; he then slung them over his shoulder and carried them back inside. All the little demons returned in triumph. The demon king told his underlings to fetch forty or fifty hempen ropes, opened the bag, and took his prisoners out one at a time to be tied up, Each of them felt that his bones had turned soft. Their muscles were numb and their skin hung loosely on them. Once tied up they were all carried out to the back and flung on the ground indiscriminately. The demon king then ordered a banquet and the devils drank from dawn till dusk before it broke up and they all went off to sleep.

In the middle of the night, as the Great Sage Monkey lay there tied up with all the gods, he heard the sound of weeping. Listening more carefully he recognized the voice of Sanzang, who was saying as he sobbed,

"Wukong,"

"I wish I had heeded the warning you gave:

From this disaster we could have steered clear.

While you're being tortured in cymbals of gold,

Nobody knows I'm a prisoner here."

"Bitter the fate that afflicts us all four;

All our achievements have now come to naught.

How can we be saved from this awful impasse

To go to the West and then home as we ought?"

When Monkey heard this he felt sorry for his master. "Although

ignoring my advice was what caused this disaster," he thought, "at least you're remembering me in your troubles. I'd better save them all and let them get away while it's night, the demons are all asleep and nobody's on guard."

The splendid Great Sage used escaping magic to make himself so small that he slipped out of his bonds, went up to the Tang Priest and said, "Master."

"Why are you here?" Sanzang asked, recognizing his voice. Monkey told him very quietly what had happened, to his great delight.

"Please rescue me as soon as you can," Sanzang said. "From now on I'll do whatever you say and not be so stubborn."

Chapter 65

907

Journey to the West

Only then did Monkey start moving, first releasing the master, Pig and Friar Sand, then the Twenty – eight Constellations; and the Protectors of the Four Quarters and the Centre, all of whom he untied one by one.

Next he brought the horse over and told his master to carry on ahead as quickly as possible. Once they were outside Monkey realized that he did not know where the luggage was and went back to look for it.

"You seem to think that things matter more than people," said the Metal Dragon of Gullet. "It ought to be enough that we've rescued your master. Why do you want to look for the luggage?"

"Of course people are important," Monkey said, "but things are even more important. In the luggage there's our passport, the brocade cassock and the golden begging bowl. They're all great treasures of the Buddhist faith, and we must have them."

"You go back and look for them, brother," said Pig, "while we start out. We'll wait for you later." Watch how the stars crowd round the Tang Priest and all use their magic powers at once to take him out of the enclosure with a breath of wind as they hurry along the main road down the slope till they reach level ground and rest.

At about the third watch the Great Sage Monkey crept slowly and

stealthily back inside to find gate inside gate all very tightly closed. When he climbed up to the upper story of a building to take a look he saw that the windows were all fastened too. He was on the point of going down again but dared not move for fear of the window – frames making a noise. He therefore made a hand – spell, shook himself and turned into a mouse immortal, or what is more commonly known as a bat. Do you know what he looked like?

His head was pointed like a rat's,

His eyes like a rat's did spark.

He emerged at twilight on his wings,

To sleep by day in the dark.

He hid away among the tiles;

The mosquitoes he caught were his food.

Bright moonlit nights he liked the best;

At flying he really was good.

He found his way in under the rafters through an open – ended tile then flew over doors till he got to the middle of the building. Here he noticed a faintly glimmering beam of light coming from under a second – floor window. It was not like the light of a lantern or candle, the glow of burning incense, a beam of evening sunlight or a flash of lightning. He went closer to the window, his heart in his mouth with excitement, and looked inside to see that the glow was coming from the luggage. The evil spirit had taken the cassock off the Tang Priest, but instead of folding it up he had thrust it untidily back into the bundles. The reason why the cassock glowed was because it was a Buddha treasure itself, with As – You – Will pearls, mani pearls, red cornelian, purple coral, sarira Buddha – relics and night – shining pearls on it. He was very pleased when he saw these things and turned back into himself to pick them up, put the carrying pole on his shoulder, and take them Chapter 65

downstairs without stopping to adjust the ropes to balance the loads.

Unfortunately the load at one end slipped off and landed with a loud crash on the floorboards. Alas!

This noise woke up the old demon king sleeping downstairs, and he leapt out of bed with a cry of "Intruders!

Intruders!" At this all the big and little demons got up too, lit lamps, and started searching all around, all shouting loudly the while, "The Tang Priest's escaped!" someone came in to report, to be followed by another saying, "Sun the Novice and all the rest of them have got away." The old demon then ordered strict security on all the gates. As soon as Monkey heard this he abandoned the luggage, somersaulted out through the windows and fled before they could catch him.

No matter how hard they looked, the evil spirits could not find the Tang Priest and the rest of them. By now the day was beginning to dawn, so the demon king seized his mace and led his hosts in hot pursuit. They found the camp of the Twenty－eight Constellations and the Five Protectors surrounded by mists and cloud at the foot of the mountain. "Where do you think you're going?" the demon king shouted. "I'm here."

"Brothers," called the Wooden Lesser Dragon of the Constellation Horn in alarm, "the monsters are here." The Metal Dragon of the Gullet, the Earth Bat of the Woman, the Sun Hare of the Chamber, the Moon Fox of the Heart, the Fire Tiger of the Tail, the Water Leopard of the Winnower, the Wooden Unicorn of the Dipper, the Metal Bull of the Ox, the Earth Raccoon－dog of the Base, the Sun Rat of the Barrens, the Moon Swallow of the Roof, the Fire Pig of the House, the Water Beast of the Wall, the Wooden Wolf of the Strider, the Metal Dog of the Harvester, the Earth Boar of the Stomach, the Sun Cock of the Pleiades, the Moon Crow of the Net, the Fire Monkey of the Turtle, the Water Ape of Orion, the Wooden Hyena of the Well, the Metal Goat of the Ghosts, the Earth River Deer of the Willow, the Sun Horse of the Seven Stars, the Moon Deer of the Spread Net, the Fire Snake－of the Wing, and the Water Worm of the Axletree, at the head of the Golden －headed Protector, the Silver－headed Protector, the Six Dings, the Six Jias, the Guardians of the Faith, Pig and Friar Sand－ －they did not take the Tang Priest or the white dragon horse－ －all rushed forward with their weapons. At the sight of them the demon king laughed a contemptuous laugh, whistled, and called up four or five thousand evil spirits, each of whom was powerful and strong. A bitter fight then followed on the Western slopes of the mountain, and a fine battle it was too:

The evil demon king had tricked the true nature:

The gentle true nature was no match for him.

With so many plots it was hard to escape from pain;

When so much cunning was used there could be no peace.

All the heavens offered their protection,

And hosts of sages helped to wage the fight.

The mother of wood suffers for showing mercy.

Determination moves the yellow – wife.

The bitter fight shook heaven and earth;

Both sides spread their nets in the struggle.

On one side the waving of banners and warcries,

On the other the beating of drums and gongs.

A cold sea of light from massed sabers and spears,

And a murderous look of the swords and the halberds.

The demon troops were cruel and tough;

The heavenly soldiers were no match for them.

Dreary clouds blocked out the sun and moon;

Spine – chilling mists lay over the landscape.

Hard and bitter was the fight,

And all because Sanzang wanted to visit the Buddha.

The evil spirit now felt more ferocious than ever as he led his hosts into the attack. Just when the issue was hanging in the balance there

could be heard an angry roar from Monkey of, "I'm here."

"What about the luggage!" Pig asked as he greeted him.

"I barely got away with my life," Monkey replied, "so what are you asking about the luggage for?"

"Stop talking, you two," said Friar Sand, who was wielding his staff. "Hurry up and fight the evil spirits." The Constellations, Protectors, Dings, Jias and all the other gods had been surrounded and bunched together by the demons in the wild melee, while the demon king attacked the three of them with his mace. Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand held the enemy off by striking and swinging with their cudgel, staff and rake. The earth and sky were now plunged into darkness, and still there was no victor. They fought on till the sun set in the Western hills and the moon rose over the Eastern islands.

Seeing how late it now was, the demon whistled and told all the fiends to be specially careful while he produced his treasure once more. Monkey could see clearly as he undid the pouch and took it in his hands.

"This is bad," said Monkey. "Let's get out of here." And with that he somersaulted straight up to the ninth heaven, not concerning himself with Pig, Friar Sand and the heavenly hosts, who failed to take his hint and were left behind to be caught in the bag again. Monkey alone escaped. The demon king then called off his forces and took them back inside the monastery, where once more he sent for ropes and tied them up again.

The Tang Priest, Pig and Friar Sand were hung up from a high beam and the white horse was tethered at the back. The gods, who were also bound, were carried down into a cellar that was then covered and sealed. We will not go into how the devils then packed everything away once more.

Chapter 65

When Monkey saved his life by springing up into the clouds and saw the devil soldiers returning, not waving their banners, he knew that his side must have been made prisoner once more. As he landed his auspicious light on the Eastern summit

He ground his teeth in hatred of the demon;

The tears flowed free as Monkey missed his master.

Then in despair he turned his face to heaven

And groaned aloud at Sanzang's new disaster.

"Master," he called, "in whatever past world did you lay down so many difficulties for yourself that you meet evil spirits at every turn? There's no end to your troubles. What are we to do?" He sighed alone up there for a long time before calming himself down and working out what to do.

"I wonder what sort of pouch it is the devil has that can hold so many things inside!" he thought. "Now it's got the gods, the heavenly generals and a lot of other people too. I'll have to ask Heaven to help me, but I fear the Jade Emperor will be angry about what has happened. Now I remember there's a True Martial God of the North, the Heavenly Honoured Demon Suppressor, who now lives on Mount Wudang in the Southern Continent of Jambu. I'll go and ask him to rescue my master." Indeed: With the Way still uncompleted ape and horse were scattered;

When the mind was masterless the Five Elements lacked life.

If you don't know what happened on this journey listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 66

All the Gods Meet a Vicious Foe

Maitreya Binds the Evil Monster

The story tells how the Great Sage Sun, finding himself at his wit's end, somersaulted by auspicious cloud straight to Mount Wudang in the Southern Continent of Jambu to ask the Heavenly Honoured Demon Suppressor to save Sanzang, Pig, Friar Sand, the heavenly soldiers and all the rest of them. He flew non－stop and was soon in sight of the patriarch's immortal domain. As he brought his cloud gently down to land and took a good look around this is what he saw:

Journey to the West

The great fortress of the Southeast,

A divine pillar of the central heaven.

Lotus Pinnacle soared in its majesty,

Purple – covered Ridge rose to a great height.

The nine rivers ended here, far from Jing and Yang;

A hundred mountains touch the stars in Wing and Axletree.

Above was the precious cave of Emptiness,

And the spirit tower of Zhu and Lu.

In the thirty – six palaces golden chimes rang,

As thousands of worshippers offered their incense.

Here the emperors of antiquity patrolled and worshipped,

Officials held jade tablets inscribed in gold.

Blue birds flew over lofty towers;

Under the canopies red gowns were worn.

The place was set on a mountain that towered over the cosmos,

An immortal domain suffused with emptiness.

Some plum trees were just in blossom,

And the hillside was covered in a blaze of color from the flowers.

Dragons hid at the bottom of ravines

While tigers lurked on the precipices.

The pheasants seemed to be talking;

Tame deer came up to people.

White cranes perched in cloud – topped junipers;

Green and red phoenixes sang to the sun.

Jade – pure, it resembles a land of immortals;

The compassion of the golden gateway rules the age.

Chapter 66

912

Journey to the West

The True Martial Lord had been born after King Purejoy and his wife Queen Victoria had dreamed one night that she conceived by swallowing the light of the sun. After fourteen months of pregnancy she had given birth in the royal palace on the first day of the third month of the year *jiachen,* the first of the reign period of *Kaihuang.* The prince

Was brave from his boyhood,

Grew into perception.

Did not take the throne,

But practised religion.

His parents could not stop him.

He gave up the palace

For mysteries and trance

Here in the mountains.

When all was completed

He could fly by broad daylight.

The Jade Emperor named him

The True Martial Lord.

He responds to dark emptiness,

Joining with tortoise and snake.

In all quarters of the compass

Is his excellence proclaimed.

He penetrates all mysteries,

Achieves every glory.

From beginning to end

He exterminates demons.

Chapter 66

913

Journey to the West

While admiring the splendid view the Great Sage Sun was soon through the first, second and third gates to his heaven. When he arrived outside the Palace of Great Peace he saw five hundred spirit officers standing crowded together in the auspicious light and atmosphere. They stepped forward to ask, "Who is it who has come?"

"I am Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven," Monkey replied, "and I would like to see the Teacher."

The spirit officers reported this at once to the patriarch, who came from his throne hall to welcome Monkey into the palace hall.

After paying his respects Monkey said, "I have a request to trouble you with."

"What?"

"I am in trouble escorting the Tang priest on his journey to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven," Monkey replied. "There is an evil monster who lives in the Lesser Thunder Monastery on a mountain called the Lesser Western Heaven in the Western Continent of Cattle－gift. When my master went in through the monastery gates and saw all the arhats, protectors, monks and priests line up there he thought that the Buddha was a real one, threw himself to the ground and started kowtowing to him. Then they caught him. Because I was too careless I let him trap me inside a pair of golden cymbals that were joined tight together without the slightest crack between them, just as if they were clamped together. Very luckily for me the Gold－headed Protector requested the Jade Emperor to send the Twenty－eight Constellations to come down to earth that very night.

They couldn't prise the cymbals apart, but the Metal Dragon of the Gullet managed to push his horn between the cymbals and bring me out, thank goodness. Then I smashed the cymbals, which woke up the monster.

When he came after us he caught us all — —me, the Twenty—eight Constellations and the Five Protectors — —and tied us all up with rope. I got out that night and rescued the constellations, the Tang Priest and the rest of them. Later I woke the old demon up again while I was looking for our things and he went after the heavenly soldiers to fight them again. When he took his pouch off to use it this time I recognized it and got away, but all the rest of them were caught. As I'm at my wit's end I've come to pay my respects to you, Teacher, and ask your help."

"In the old days," said the patriarch, "I garrisoned the North. My position was that of True Martial God, and I wiped out evil spirits all over the world on the orders of the Jade Emperor. Later I rode barefoot and with my hair loose on the leaping snake and the divine tortoise, and led the five thunder generals, young giant dragons, lions, ferocious beasts and vicious dragons to put an end to the black demonic atmosphere in the Northeast.

That was when I was acting under the orders of the Original Heavenly Honoured One. Now I live in tranquility and ease on Mount Wudang in the Hall of Great Peace. The mountains and seas have long been at peace, and heaven and earth are very calm. In our Southern Continent of Jambu and the Northern Continent of Kuru all evil monsters have been exterminated and wicked demons are seen no more. I am very grateful that you've come to see me, Great Sage: the only trouble is that in the absence of instructions from Heaven I can't fight on my own authority alone. If I sent all my gods the Jade Emperor might well take offence; but if I turned your request down flat, Great Sage, I'd be showing a lack of finer feeling. I'm sure that even if there are evil creatures on that road West they cannot be really terrible. So I'll send General Tortoise, General Snake, and five magic dragons to help you. I guarantee that they will capture the evil spirit and rescue your master."

Monkey then bowed in thanks to the patriarch and went with Tortoise, Snake and the magic dragons, all carrying the finest and sharpest of weapons, back to the West. Before long they were back at the Lesser Thunder Monastery, where they landed their clouds and went straight to the gate to challenge them to battle.

Meanwhile King Yellow Brow had called all his demonic hosts together before the main hall of the monastery to say to them, "Sun the Novice hasn't been here for the last couple of days. I wonder where he's gone for reinforcements."

Chapter 66

914

Journey to the West

Before the words were out of his mouth a little devil came from the main gates to report, "Sun the Novice is here with some dragon, snake and tortoise officers. They're demanding battle outside the main gates."

"How ever did that monkey get them?" the demon king asked. "Where are they from?"

With that he put on his armor and went out through the main gate, shouting, "Which dragon gods are you?

How dare you invade my immortal domain?"

Looking majestic and summoning up their spirits, the five dragons and Generals Tortoise and Snake shouted,

"Damned monster! We're five dragon gods, and Generals Tortoise and Snake who stand before the Heavenly Honoured Demon Suppressor, the Patriarch of the Indiffirentiated Unity, from the Palace of Great Peace on Mount Wudang. We are here at the invitation of the Great Sage Equaling Heaven and on the authority of the Heavenly Honoured One to arrest you. Hand over the Tang Priest, the constellations and all the rest of them and your life will be spared, you evil spirit. Otherwise we'll hack the bodies of every one of you devils on this mountain into little pieces, and burn all your buildings to ashes."

When the demon heard this he was furious. "Animals!" he retorted. "How dare you talk like that? What sort of powers do you think you have? Stay where you are, and take this!" The five dragons turned their clouds over to make rain while the two generals raised dust and sand as they all charged into the attack with their spears, sabers, swords and halberds. Monkey followed them into action wielding his iron cudgel. It was a fine fight.

The evil demon used his might;

Monkey went for help.

When the evil demon used his might

He occupied the monastery and created Buddha images.

When Monkey went for help

He traveled far to a precious land to borrow the dragons.

Tortoise and Snake created water and fire;

The evil spirits took to arms.

The five dragons went to the West as instructed,

While Monkey hung behind for his master's sake.

Sword and halberd flashed like coloured lightning;

The spears and sabers gleamed like rainbows.

The wolf－toothed mace

Was powerful, short and flexible;

The gold－banded cudgel

Could change at its owner's will.

There were crashes like firecrackers,

And the rhythmic clang of metal being struck.

The monster was attacked by fire and water,

And weapons crowded close around the spirits.

The cries of battle frightened wolves and tigers;

The din disturbed both gods and devils.

Just when the battle was still unresolved

The evil spirit fetched out his treasure again.

When Monkey had been leading the five dragons and two generals in fight against the demon king for an hour the demon took off his pouch and held it in his hand. "Watch out, gentlemen," exclaimed Monkey in horror.

Not realizing what was happening, they all stopped attacking with their weapons and surged forward. There was a loud swish as the demon king threw his pouch into the air. Abandoning the five dragons and the two generals to be wrapped up in the pouch, the Great Sage Monkey escaped by somersaulting up above the ninth heaven. The evil spirits returned in triumph once more, tied them up too, took them down into the pit and put the lid on it.

Monkey landed his cloud and lay sprawled out under the peak, listless and dispirited. "That demon is a terror,"

he thought with bitter regret, and without realizing what was happening he shut his eyes as if he were going to sleep.

Just then there came a call: "Great Sage, don't go to sleep. Get up and rescue them as soon as you can. Your master's life is in great danger." At once Monkey opened his eyes again and sprang to his feet to see that it was the Duty God of the Day.

"You wretched little god," Monkey shouted, "you were so greedy for your blood and sacrifices over there that you haven't reported for duty for days. Why are you coming to disturb me now? Put out your foot. I'm going to hit you a couple of times to cheer myself up. I'm feeling low."

The Duty God hastily bowed and said, "Great Sage, you are one of the happy immortals in the human world.

How could you possibly be feeling low? We've been here for a long time on the Bodhisattva's orders to keep secret guard over the Tang Priest. We and the local gods have never left him for a moment, which is why we can't pay our respects to you often enough. You can't hold that against me."

"If you're guarding him," Monkey replied, "tell me where the evil spirit has imprisoned the constellations, the protectors, the guardians, my master and the rest of them. What are they suffering?"

"Your master and your fellow – disciples have been hung up in the cloister outside the main hall," the Duty God replied. "The constellations are all in agony in a pit. For the last couple of days I've had no news of you, Great Sage, but I've just seen that the evil spirits have captured the divine dragons, Tortoise and Snake and put them in the pit too. It was only then that we realized you must have fetched some reinforcements, Great Sage, which is why we came specially to look for you. Whatever you do you must rescue them at once, Great Sage, no matter how tired you are."

Hearing this, Monkey said to the duty god, the tears streaming down his face, "I'm too ashamed to go up to Heaven, and I haven't the nerve to go to the sea. I'm afraid of asking for the Bodhisattva's help and too miserable to look the Buddha in the face. The ones who were captured just now were the True Martial God's Tortoise, Snake and five dragons and their forces. There's nowhere else I can turn for help. What am I to do?"

The Duty God smiled as he replied, "Relax, Great Sage, I've thought of some elite troops who are bound to be able to subdue these demons. You went to Wudang just now that was in the Southern Jambu Continent. The troops I have in mind come from the same continent, from Bincheng on Mound Xuyi. It's what's now called Sizhou. There's a Great Sage Bodhisattva King Teacher there who has enormous magical powers. He has a disciple called Little Prince Zhang and four divine generals: the other year they subdued the Water Mother Goddess. You should go there yourself to ask him. If he in his kindness is willing to help you're bound to be able to catch the demon and save the master."

The news delighted Monkey, who said, "You look after the master and don't let him come to any harm while I go off to ask his help."

Monkey then set off on his somersault and left that demon – infested place to go straight to Mount Xuyi. He was soon there, and when he looked around he saw that it was a fine place.

The Yangtse was not far to the South,

To the North it faced the Huai River.

To the East it led to the islands in the sea,

To the West it was connected with Fengfou.

On the mountain – top was a lofty temple

While springs gushed forth from its sides.

Grotesquely – shaped rocks towered high;

Lofty pines were elegantly angular.

There was always fresh fruit in season,

And every kind of flower opened in the sun.

People moved around like armies of ants

While boats came from far and wide like flights of geese.

Chapter 66

917

Journey to the West

On it there stood

The Auspicious Crag Temple,

The Palace of the Eastern Peak,

The Shrine of the Five Illustrious Ones,

The Tortoise Mountain Monastery.

Rhythmic bells and incense smoke rose to the heavens.

There were also

The Crystal Spring,

The Valley of Five Stupas,

The Terrace of Eight Immortals,

The Apricot Orchard.

The colours of the mountain and trees lit up Bincheng.

Boundless were the stretches of cloud,

While hidden birds still sang when they were tired.

Never mind mounts Tai, Song, Heng or Hua;

Here was the beauty of an earthly paradise.

The Great Sage enjoyed the view enormously as he crossed the Huai River, entered the city of Bincheng, and arrived at the gates of the Great Sage's Dhyana Monastery. Over the majestic halls and colorful cloisters there towered a pagoda. Indeed:

It rose ten thousand feet through clouds to the sky;

The golden vase penetrated the heavens above.

The light from it filled the universe;

No shadows were cast on its windows.

Heavenly music was heard when the wind rang the bells;

The sun shone on roof—dragons facing the Buddha—hall.

Birds constantly came here to sing their complaints;

Endlessly beautiful was the view of the Huai River.

Monkey looked at it all as he went in to the inner gates, where the Bodhisattva King Teacher, who was expecting him, had come out to meet him with Little Prince Zhang. After they had greeted each other and exchanged polite remarks Monkey said, "I'm escorting the Tang Priest to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. We have come to the Lesser Thunder Monastery where there's a Yellow—browed Demon who's pretending to be a Buddha. Not realizing he was an impostor, my master kowtowed to him and was captured. Then I was caught inside a pair of golden cymbals until, thank goodness, the constellations who had been sent down from heaven rescued me. I

smashed the cymbals, but when we fought him again he wrapped the heavenly gods, the protectors, the guardians, my master and my fellow–disciples up in a cloth bag. As I have nowhere else to turn, Bodhisattva, I've come to call on you and ask you to give play to your great strength. Use the magic powers with which you put down the Water Mother and saved the common people to go with me to rescue my master. Then he can take the scriptures back to China to be transmitted forever, praise the wisdom of our Buddha and make the prajna–paramita better known."

"What you ask today is indeed for the greater glory of our Buddha," said King Teacher, "and I really ought to go myself. But it's early summer now, just the time when the Huai River floods. The Great Sage Water Ape I subdued recently gets active when there's water, and I'm worried that he'd take advantage of my absence to make so much trouble that no divine powers could bring him back under control. I'll send my disciple with four generals to help you force the demon into submission."

Monkey thanked him then headed back by cloud with the four generals and Little Prince Zhang to the Lesser Western Heaven, where they went straight to the Lesser Thunder Monastery. Here Little Prince Zhang brandished his paper–white spear and the four generals swung their superb swords as they shouted abuse to challenge the demons to battle.

When the little devils ran inside to report this, the demon king led his devils out once more, had his drums beaten and replied, "Who've you persuaded to come this time?"

Before the words were all out of his mouth Little Prince Zhang at the head of the four generals shouted,

"Damned evil spirit! Do you have no eyes in your head? Don't you recognize who we are?"

"Whose underlings are you?" the demon king said. "How dare you help him?"

"I am the disciple of the Great Sage of Sizhou, the Bodhisattva King Teacher, and I'm here on his orders with four divine generals to capture you," the prince replied.

"What sort of martial arts do you have," replied the demon king with a sneer, "that give you the nerve to be so insulting?"

"As you want to know about my martial powers," the prince replied, "let me tell you: My people come from the Flowing Sands River,

Where my father used to be king of Sandland.

Chapter 66

919

Journey to the West

I was a weak and sickly child,

Born under a bad influence and an unlucky star.

Long had I admired my master's immortal powers,

When in a chance meeting he taught me the secret.

Half a pill of elixir cured my sickness;

I abandoned my throne to cultivate my conduct.

Once I knew bow to live as long as heaven;

My face became youthful and will remain so forever.

I have been to the assemblies under the dragon – flower tree,

And ridden by cloud to the Buddha's hall.

Seizing the fogs and winds I subdued the watery tribe;

I defended the mountain by subduing dragons and tigers.

The dutiful people raised a lofty pagoda

To calm the seas through the glow of its relics.

My paper – white spear can capture all demons;

Evil spirits are caught in the gray sleeve of my coat.

Now peace and joy reign in the city of Bincheng,

And all the world praises Little Zhang's fame."

When the demon king heard this he replied with a touch of a mocking

smile, "Prince, when you abandoned your throne to follow the Bodhisattva King Teacher what sort of arts of immortality did you learn? All you're good for is capturing water monsters in the Huai River. You shouldn't have believed all the nonsense Sun the Novice talked and have come across all those mountains and rivers to offer your life. We'll soon find out whether you're immortal or not."

When Little Zhang heard this he was very angry and thrust straight for the demon's face with his spear. The four generals all rushed into the attack together and so did the Great Sage Monkey, wielding his iron cudgel.

The splendid evil spirit was not afraid in the least as he blocked, parried and struck back with his short and flexible wolf–tooth mace. It was a fine battle:

Chapter 66

The little prince with his paper–white spear,

Made stronger by the four generals' swords,

Wukong using his gold–banded cudgel,

With one heart they surrounded the demon king.

Truly his magical powers were great

As without a trace of fear he resisted their attacks.

The wolf–tooth mace was a Buddha weapon

Preserving him from wounds by swords or spear.

Wile howled the wind

Through the turbid swirl of evil vapors.

One used his skill for love of mortal things;

The other's heart was set on the Buddha and the scriptures.

They charged and they raged,

Shrouding sun, moon and stars in cloud,

Each of them evil and vicious in anger.

For long the Three Vehicles could not assert dominance:

Bitter and well – matched was the battle of rival skills.

After the fight had been going on for a long time and was still inconclusive the evil spirit undid his pouch and Monkey once more shouted, "Look out, gentlemen." The prince and his followers did not realize what he was telling them to look out for, so with a swish the demon king had them caught in his pouch. Only Monkey escaped in time. We will not describe how once more the demon king returned in triumph, sent for ropes, and had them tied up and put into the pit under lock and lid.

When Monkey leapt up into the sky and saw the demon leading his troops back and fastening the gates he brought his auspicious light down to land and stood on the Western slope of the mountain. "Master!" he wept aloud in his misery,

"Since being converted and becoming a monk

I've been grateful to Guanyin for ending my woes.

In escorting you West to seek the great Way

I have helped you towards the Buddha's own temple.

Who would have thought when the going looked easy

That we'd be attacked by so mighty a monster.

None of my tricks or devices succeed;

All the help I have looked for has just been in vain."

As Monkey was in the very depths of misery a brightly – coloured cloud suddenly landed to the Southwest and the whole mountain peak was lashed with a torrential rainstorm. "Wukong," a voice called, "do

you know who I am?" Monkey hurried forward to look and this is what he saw: Big ears, a broad jaw and a square face;

Wide shoulders, a deep chest and a fat body.

A jolly voice that was full of fun,

A pair of bright and sparkling eyes.

His clothes hung open; luck was all about him.

His straw sandals were comfortable and his spirits high.

He was the lord of the land of bliss,

The laughing monk Maitreya.

As soon as Monkey saw him he kowtowed immediately and said, "Where are you going, Lord Buddha from the East? I beg you to forgive me for failing to keep out of your way."

"I'm here because of the demon in the Lesser Thunder Monastery," the Buddha replied.

"I am very grateful for your great kindness, my lord," Monkey replied. "May I ask where the demon is from and where he became an evil spirit? What sort of treasure is that pouch of his? Please tell me, my lord."

"He was a yellow–browed page who used to strike my stone chime," the Buddha Maitreya replied. "On the third day of the third month this year I left him looking after my palace when I went to an assembly of the Primal One. That was when he stole some of my treasures and became a spirit as an imitation Buddha. That Chapter 66

pouch is my future heaven bag, or what's generally called a human seed bag. The wolf–tooth cudgel was originally the stick for striking the chime."

When Monkey heard this he shouted, "You're a splendid laughing monk, I must say. By letting that boy escape you let him masquerade as a Buddha and ruin things for me. You ought to be charged with slack management of your household."

"I was careless," Maitreya replied. "Besides, your master and you disciples have not yet come to the end of the demons you will have to deal with. That is why every kind of spiritual creature has been coming down to earth. It's right that you should suffer. Now I'm here to capture him for you."

"That evil spirit has very great magic powers," Monkey replied, "and you haven't got any weapons. How can you possibly subdue him?"

"I'll make a little hut under the mountain," said Maitreya, "where I grow fruit and melons. You challenge him to battle, lose in the fight that follows, and lure him into my melon patch. All my melons are still unripe, so you're to change into a big ripe melon. When he gets there he's bound to want a melon and I'll give you to him. Once you're in his stomach you can do what you like to him. Then I'll get his pouch and we can put him inside it."

"It's a very good plan," Monkey replied, "but how will you know which is the ripe melon I'll have turned into?

And why should he be willing to go there after me?"

"I'm the ruler of the world," laughed Maitreya, "and I have miraculous vision. Of course I'll know which one is you. I'd recognize you whatever you turned into. The only worry is that the demon won't come after you. I'll have to teach you some new magic."

"But he's bound to catch me in his pouch," Monkey replied, "not come after me. What magic power could I use?"

"Stretch your hand out," Maitreya said. Monkey stretched out his left hand. Maitreya moistened the forefinger of his own right hand with some magic saliva, wrote "stop" on it, and told Monkey to make a fist. If he opened that hand again in the demon's face the demon would certainly come after him.

Monkey cheerfully made the fist as he had been instructed and went back to the monastery gates, brandishing his cudgel with one hand as he shouted, "Evil spirit, your lord and master Monkey's here. Come out at once and we'll see who's the champion." When the little devils rushed inside to report the demon king asked how many soldiers Monkey had brought with him this time.

"None," they replied. "He's here by himself."

"That Monkey's at his wit's end and exhausted," the demon king

laughed, "and he can't get anyone else to help. He's just throwing his life away now." Once he was in his armor again he took his treasure and his flexible wolf–tooth mace and went out through the monastery gates shouting, "You won't be able to hold out this time, Sun Wukong."

"Damned demon," Monkey replied abusively. "What do you mean, I won't be able to hold out?"

"Look at you," the demon replied. "You're at your wit's end and exhausted. There's nobody else you can turn to for help. Now you're here again to try to resist me there won't be any more divine soldiers or anything like that to help you. That's why I said you wouldn't be able to hold out."

Chapter 66

923

Journey to the West

"Fiend," said Monkey, "you don't even know whether you want to live or to die. Stop all that talk and take this!"

Seeing that Monkey was wielding his cudgel single–handed, the demon burst out laughing: "What a clever little ape! Do you think you'll be able to hold me off by using your cudgel one–handed?"

"My dear boy," said Monkey, "if I used both hands it would be too much for you. Even with four or five hands you wouldn't be able to beat me even if I had one hand tied behind my back. That is, as long as you didn't use that pouch of yours."

"Very well then," the demon king replied, "I won't use my treasure. I'll give you a straight fight and we'll see who's the best man." With that he raised his wolf–tooth mace and attacked Monkey, who opened his clenched fist in the demon's face before wielding the cudgel in both hands. Once the demon was under the spell he put all thought of retreat out of his mind and indeed did not use his pouch, but went for Monkey with his mace.

Monkey feinted then turned and fled in defeat, pursued by the evil spirit down the Western slopes of the mountain.

As soon as he saw the melon field Monkey rolled himself into a ball to go into it and turn himself into a big, ripe, sweet watermelon. The evil

spirit stopped to look all around, not knowing where Monkey had gone.

He rushed over to the hut and asked, "Who's growing these melons?"

Maitreya, who had turned himself into an old melon grower, came out of the thatched hut and said, "I am, Your Majesty."

"Have you got any ripe ones?" the demon king asked.

"Yes," Maitreya replied.

"Pick me a ripe one then," said the demon. "I'm thirsty."

Maitreya then picked the melon that was Monkey transformed and handed it to the demon king respectfully with both hands. The demon king did not stop to examine it, but took it and bit into it. This was Monkey's chance to go straight down the demon's throat. Without any more ado he started hitting out and kicking, grabbing and clawing at the monster's entrails and stomach, turning somersaults, standing on his head, and doing just as he liked. The evil spirit ground his teeth and grimaced in agony, the tears flowing down his face, as he rolled around the melon field till it looked like a threshing floor.

"Stop, stop!" he shouted. "Save me, save me."

Maitreya then reverted to his true form and said with a jolly smile, "Evil beast, do you recognize me?"

When the evil spirit looked up he fell to his knees on the ground, rubbing his stomach with both hands and kowtowing as he said, "Spare me,. master, spare me. I'll never do it again."

Maitreya then stepped forward, seized him with one hand, undid the future heaven pouch, took back the stick for beating the stone chime, and said, "Sun Wukong, spare his life for my sake."

Monkey, who was still beside himself with loathing and hatred, went on punching, kicking, and making havoc in the demon's insides until the demon collapsed in unbearable agony.

"He's had all he can take, Wukong," Maitreya said. "Spare him now."

"Open your mouth wide," Sun Wukong finally said, "and let me out." Although the demon's insides had been tied up into agonizing knots his heart had not yet been damaged, and as the saying goes, Until the heart is damaged nobody dies;

Leaves only fall when the trunk's sap dries.

As soon as he was told to open his mouth wide he did so, in spite of the pain. Only then did Monkey jump out and turn back into himself. He at once seized his cudgel and was about to strike again, but the Buddha Maitreya had already put the evil spirit into the pouch and slung it at his waist. Holding the chime–stick in his hand Maitreya said, "Evil beast, where are the golden cymbals you stole?"

The monster, who was desperate to live, could be heard mumbling inside the future heaven bag, "Sun Wukong smashed them."

"If they're broken give me my gold back," said Maitreya.

"It's piled up on the lotus throne in the main hall," the monster replied.

Holding the bag in one hand and the stick in the other the Buddha laughed as he said, "Wukong, you and I are going to get my gold back." After the display of such dharma power Sun Wukong dared not be at all remiss, but took the master back up the mountain and into the monastery, where they gathered all the pieces of gold.

Although the monastery gates were firmly shut one push with the stick was enough to open them wide, and when they looked inside they saw that all the little devils had taken the monastery's wealth and were now fleeing in all directions. When Monkey found one he killed one; when he found two he killed two; and so on until he had killed all the six or seven hundred little devils, who resumed their real forms as mountain spirits, tree monsters, evil beasts and animal demons.

The Buddha gathered all the pieces of gold together, blew on them with magic breath, and said the words of a spell. At once they were the two golden cymbals again. He then took his leave of Monkey and headed straight back to his paradise by auspicious cloud. The Great Sage then released the Tang Priest, Pig and Friar Sand.

After being hung up there for several days the idiot was desperately hungry. Without waiting to thank Monkey he ran straight to the kitchen, his back bent, to find some food. As it happened the demon

had sent for his lunch but not had time to eat it when Monkey challenged him to battle. The moment he saw it Pig ate half a saucepan of rice before fetching a pair of bowls for the master and Friar Sand each to eat two bowlfuls. Only then did he thank Monkey and ask about the evil spirit.

Monkey told him all about how he had asked the help of King Teacher, Tortoise and Snake, then borrowed the prince from the True Lord, and about how Maitreya had subdued the demon. When Sanzang heard this he expressed his gratitude at great length and kowtowed to all the heavens. "Disciple," he asked, "where are all the gods imprisoned?"

"The Duty God of the Day told me yesterday that they were all in the pit," Monkey replied. "Pig," he continued, "you and I are going to rescue them."

Now that he had eaten, the idiot was full of strength and energy again as he found his rake and went with Monkey to open up the pit, untie the prisoners, and ask them to come out to under the tower. Sanzang, who had now put his cassock back on, bowed to each of them in thanks, after which the Great Sage saw the five dragons and two generals off on their way back to Wudang, Little Prince Zhang and the four generals on their way to Bincheng, and the Twenty–eight Constellations on their way back to the palaces of Heaven. He also released the Protectors and Guardians so that each could return to his own territory.

Master and disciples stayed on in the monastery to rest for a few hours. Then, after the horse had eaten its fill and the luggage all been packed, they set out again the next morning. Before leaving they burnt the towers, thrones, halls and preaching chambers to ashes. Thus it was that Without any cares from their troubles they flee,

From disasters and obstacles finally free.

If you don't know when they reached the Great Thunder Monastery, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 67

The story tells how Sanzang and his three disciples happily continued along their way after leaving the Lesser Western Heaven. They had been going for over a month, and it was now late spring. The flowers were in bloom and all the woods they could see were full of green shade. After a spell of wind and rain dusk was falling once more.

"Disciple," said Sanzang, reining in his horse, "it's getting late. Which way shall we go to look for somewhere to spend the night?"

"Don't worry, Master," said Monkey with a smile. "Even if we can't find anywhere to stay we three all have our skills. Tell Pig to cut some grass and Friar Sand to fell some pines. I know a bit of carpentry. We can make ourselves a hut by the road here good enough to stay in for a year. Why the rush?"

"But this is no place to stay, brother," said Pig. "The mountain's crawling with wild beasts like tigers, leopards and wolves. Mountain ogres and hobgoblins are all over the place. It's hard enough travelling by daylight. I wouldn't dare spend the night here."

"Idiot!" said Monkey. "You're getting more and more hopeless. I'm not just shooting my mouth off. With this cudgel in my hands I could hold up the sky itself if it collapsed."

Master and disciples were in the middle of their conversation when they noticed a hill farm not far away.

"Good," said Monkey, "a place for the night."

"Where?" the venerable elder asked.

"Isn't that a house in the trees over there?" asked Monkey, pointing. "Let's ask if we can put up for the night there. We can be on our way first thing in the morning."

Sanzang was so delighted he urged his horse forward. Dismounting outside the wicker gates he found them firmly fastened.

"Open up, open up," he called, knocking on the gates. They were opened from the inside by an old man with a stick who was wearing rush sandals, a black turban and a plain gown.

"Who's that shouting?" he asked.

Putting his hands together in front of his chest, Sanzang bowed in polite greeting and said, "Venerable patron, I am a monk sent from the East to fetch scriptures from the Western Heaven. As I have reached this distinguished place so late in the day I have come to your residence to ask for a night's lodging. I beg you to be charitable to us."

"Monk," the elder said, "you may want to go to the West, but you'll never get there. This is the Lesser Western Heaven, and it's a very long way from here to the Great Western Heaven. This place alone is hard enough to get out of, to say nothing of the difficulties of the rest of the journey."

"Why is it hard to get out of?" Sanzang asked.

The old man put his hands together and replied, "About a dozen miles West of our village is a Runny Persimmon Lane and a mountain called Seven Perfections."

"Why 'Seven Perfections?'" Sanzang asked.

"It's 250 miles across," the old man replied, "and covered with persimmons. There's an old saying that persimmon trees have seven perfections:

1. They prolong life.

2. They are very shady.

3. No birds nest in them.

4. They are free of insects.

5. Their leaves are very beautiful after frost.

6. The fruit is excellent.

7. The branches and leaves are big and fat.

That's why it's called Mount Seven Perfections. This is a big, thinly populated area, and nobody has ever been deep into the mountain. Every year over – ripe, rotten persimmons fall on the path, and they fill the rocky lane right up. The rain, dew, snow and frost attack them, and they rot all through the summer until the whole path is a mass of putrefaction. The people round here call it Runny Shit, or Runny Persimmon, Lane. When there's a West wind it smells even worse than a cesspit being emptied. As it's now high spring and there's strong Southeasterly blowing you can't smell it yet." Sanzang felt too depressed to speak.

Monkey could not contain himself. "Silly old fool," he shouted at the top of his voice. "We're here late at night to find somewhere to stay, and you're trying to scare us with all that talk. If your house really is so poky that there's no room for us to sleep indoors we'll spend the night squatting under this tree. So cut the cackle." At the sight of Monkey's hideous face the old man shut his mouth, petrified with fear.

Then he plucked up his courage, pointed his stick at Monkey and shouted, "Damn you, you bony – faced, pointy – browed, flat – nosed, sunken – cheeked, hairy – eyed, sickly – looking devil. You've got no sense of respect, sticking your mouth out like that and insulting an old gentleman."

"You're not very perceptive, old chap," Monkey replied, putting on a smile. "You don't realize who this sickly – looking devil is. As the manual of physiognomy says, 'A freakish face is like a rock in which fine jade is hidden.' You're completely wrong to judge people on their looks. Ugly I certainly am, but I know a trick or two."

"Where are you from?" the old man asked. "What's your name? What powers do you have?" To this Monkey replied with a smile:

"My home is in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body;

My conduct I cultivated on the Mount of Flowers and Fruit.

After studying with the Patriarch of the Spirit – tower Heart Mountain
I learned complete and perfect skill in the martial arts.

I can stir up the oceans, subdue mother dragons,

Carry mountains on my shoulders, and drive the sun along.

At capturing monsters and demons I'm champion;

Ghosts and gods are terrified when I shift the stars.

Great is my fame as sky – thief and earth – turner;

I'm the Handsome Stone Monkey of infinite transformations.

Chapter 67

This turned the old man's anger to delight. Bowing to them he said, "Please come into my humble abode and make yourselves comfortable." The four of them then went in together, leading the horse and carrying the load. All that could be seen to either side of the gates were prickly thorns. The inner gates were set in a wall of brick and stone that had more thorns on top of it, and only when they had gone through them did they see a three – roomed tiled house. The old man pulled up chairs for them to sit on while they waited for tea to be brought and gave orders for a meal. Soon a table was brought in and set with wheat gluten, beancurd, sweet potatoes, radishes, mustard greens, turnips, rice and sour – mallow soup.

Master and disciples all ate their fill. After the meal Pig pulled Monkey aside and whispered, "Brother, the old bloke wasn't going to let us stay at first. Now he's given us this slap – up meal. Why?"

"It wasn't worth very much, was it?" Brother Monkey replied. "Tomorrow we'll make him give us ten kinds of fruit and ten dishes of food."

"You've got a nerve," Pig replied. "You talked him into giving us a meal all right with all that boasting. But we'll be on our way tomorrow. How can he give you things?"

"Don't be so impatient," said Monkey, "I've got a way to cope."

Dusk soon started to draw in. The old man brought a lamp, and Monkey asked with a bow, "What is your surname, sir?"

"Li," the old man replied.

"I suppose this must be Li Village," Monkey continued.

"No," said the old man, "this is Tuoluo Village. Over five hundred families live here. Most of them have other surnames. I am the only one called Li."

"Benefactor Li," Monkey replied, "with what kind intentions did you give us that ample meal?"

"Just now you said that you could capture evil monsters," said the old man. "We have a monster here that we'd like you to capture for us, and we will of course reward you generously."

Monkey then chanted a "na—a—aw" of respect and said, "I accept your commission."

"Just look at him," said Pig, "asking for trouble. The moment he hears there's a demon to catch he's nicer to him than he would be to his own grandfather. He even chanted a 'na—a—aw' first."

"You don't understand, brother," said Monkey. "My 'na—a—aw' clinched the deal. Now he won't hire anyone else."

When Sanzang heard this he said, "You monkey, you always want to grab things for yourself. If that evil spirit's powers are too great for you to capture him then we monks will be shown up as liars."

"Don't be cross with me, Master," Monkey said with a smile. "Let me ask some more questions."

"What else?" the old man asked.

"This fine village is on an open plain and a lot of people live here," said Monkey. "It's not remote and isolated.

What evil spirit would dare come to your door?"

Chapter 67

929

Journey to the West

"I will be frank with you," the old man replied. "We had long lived in peace and prosperity here till a sudden, strong wind blew three and a half years ago. Everyone was busy at the time threshing the wheat on the threshing floor or transplanting rice in the paddy fields. We thought it was just a change in the weather. We never imagined that when the wind had blown by an evil spirit would eat the horses and

cattle that people had put out to pasture as well as the pigs and the sheep. He swallowed hens and geese whole, and any men or women he found he devoured alive. Since then he's come again each of the last two years to murder us.

Venerable sir, if you really do have magic powers to capture the evil spirit and cleanse the place of him, we will most certainly reward you generously and with great respect."

"But the monster will be hard to catch," Monkey replied.

"Yes," said Pig, "very hard. We're pilgrim monks only here for the night. We'll be on our way tomorrow. We can't catch any monsters."

"So you monks just tricked that meal out of me," the old man said. "When we first met you talked very big.

You said you could move the stars and capture evil monsters. But now I've told you about this you pretend he can't be caught."

"Old man," said Monkey, "it would be easy to catch the evil spirit, except that you people here don't work together. That's why it's hard."

"How can you be so sure that we don't work together?" the old man asked.

"If the monster has been harassing you for three years, goodness only knows how many lives he's taken,"

Monkey replied. "I reckon that if every family put up one ounce of silver the five hundred households could raise five hundred ounces, and with that you could find a priest somewhere who'd exorcise the monster. Why did you cheerfully put up with three years of such cruelty from him?"

"You talk of spending money," the old man said. "You're trying to shame us to death. Every family here has spent four or five ounces of silver. The year before last we went to invite a Buddhist monk South of the mountains here to catch the monster, but he failed."

"How did the monk try to do it?" Brother Monkey asked. To this the old man replied:

"The monk wore a cassock

And recited the scriptures;

First the Peacock Sutra

And then the Lotus.

He burned incense in a burner,

Held a bell between his hands.

His reading of the scriptures

Alarmed the evil spirit,

Chapter 67

930

Journey to the West

Who came straight to the farm

Amid his wind and clouds.

The monk fought with the spirit

And it was a splendid sight:

One of them landed a punch,

The other grabbed at his foe.

The monk had the advantage of

Having a hairless head.

But soon the demon had won,

And gone straight back to his clouds.

When the wound had dried in the sun

We went up close for a look;

The monk's bald head was smashed open

Just like a ripe watermelon.

"In other words," laughed Monkey, "he lost."

"He just paid with his life," the old man replied. "We were the ones who lost. We had to buy his coffin, pay for his funeral, and give compensation to his disciple. That silver wasn't enough for the disciple. He's still trying to sue us. He won't call it a day."

"Did you hire anyone else to catch the demon?" Monkey asked.

"Last year we invited a Taoist priest to do it," the old man answered.

"How did he try?" Monkey asked.

"The Taoist," the old man replied,

"Wore a golden crown on his head,

And magic robes on his body,

He sounded his magic wand,

Chapter 67

931

Journey to the West

Used charms and water too.

He made gods and generals do his will,

Captured demons and goblins.

A wild wind howled and roared,

While black fog blotted all out.

Demon and Taoist

Were evenly matched;

They fought till nightfall,

When the fiend went back to the clouds.

Heaven and earth were clear

And all of us people were there.

We went out to search for the priest,

Found him drowned in the mountain stream.

When we fished him out to look

He was like a drenched chicken."

"In other words," said Monkey with a smile, "he lost too."

"He only paid with his life, but we had to spend a lot of money that wasn't really necessary," the old man replied.

"It doesn't matter," Monkey said. "It doesn't matter. Wait till I catch the demon for you."

"If you've got the power to catch him I'll ask some of the village elders to write an undertaking to give you as much silver as you want when you've defeated him. You'll not be a penny short. But if you lose don't try to extort money out of us. We must each accept the will of heaven."

"Old man," said Monkey, "they've got you terrified of extortion. We're not like that. Send for the elders."

The old man was delighted. He sent his slaves to invite seven or eight old men from among his next – door neighbors, his cousins, his wife's family and his friends. They all came to meet the strangers, and when they had greeted the Tang Priest they cheerfully discussed the capture of the demon.

"Which of your distinguished disciples will do it?" they asked.

"I will," said Monkey, putting his hands together in front of his chest.

"You'll never do, never," said the old man with horror. "The evil spirit's magic powers are enormous, and it's huge too. Venerable sir, you're so tiny and skinny you'd slip through one of the gaps between its teeth."

"Old man," said Monkey with a smile, "You're no judge of people. Small I may be, but I'm solid. There's a lot more to me than meets the eye." When the elders heard this they had to take him at his word.

"Venerable sir," they said, "how big a reward will you want for capturing the demon?"

"Why do you have to talk about a reward?" Monkey asked. "As the saying goes, 'Gold dazzles, silver is white and stupid, and copper coins stink.' We're virtuous monks and we definitely won't take money."

"In that case you must all be lofty monks who obey your vows," the elders said. "But even if you won't accept money we can't let you work for nothing. We all live by agriculture. If you subdue the demon and clean the place up, every family here will give you a third of an acre of good farmland, which will make over 150 acres altogether. Your master and you disciples can build a monastery there and sit in meditation. That would be much better than going on your long journey."

"It would be even worse," replied brother Monkey with a smile. "If we asked for land we'd have to raise horses, do labor service, pay grain taxes and hand over hay. We'll never be able to go to bed at dusk or lie in after the fifth watch. It'd be the death of us."

"If you won't accept anything, how are we to express our thanks?" the elders asked.

"We're men of religion," said Monkey. "Some tea and a meal will be thanks enough for us."

"That's easy," said the elders. "But how are you going to catch the demon?"

"Once it comes I'll get it," said Monkey.

"But it's enormous," the elders said. "It stretches from the earth to the sky. It comes in wind and goes in mist.

How are you ever going to get close to it?"

"When it comes to evil spirits who can summon winds and ride on clouds," Monkey replied, "I treat them as mere kids. It makes no difference how big it is— —I have ways of beating it."

As they were talking the howl of a great wind made the eight or nine elders start shaking with fear. "Monk, you've asked for trouble and you've got it," they said. "You talked about the monster and here he is."

Old Mr. Li opened the door and said to his relations and the Tang Priest, "Come in, come in, the demon's here."

This so alarmed Pig and Friar Sand that they wanted to go inside too, but Monkey grabbed each of them with one of his hands and said, "You're a disgrace. You're monks and you ought to know better. Stay where you are, and don't try to run away. Come into the courtyard with me. We're going to see what kind of evil spirit this is."

"But brother," said Pig, "they've been through this before. The noise of the wind means that the demon's coming. They've all gone to hide. We're not friends or relations of the demon. We've had no business dealings with him. What do we want to see him for?" Monkey was so strong that with no further argument he hauled Chapter 67

them into the courtyard and made them stand there while the wind blew louder and louder. It was a splendid wind that

Uprooted trees and flattened woods, alarming wolves and tigers,
Stirred up the rivers and oceans to the horror of ghosts and gods,
Blowing the triple peaks of the great Mount Hua all upside down,
Shaking the earth and sky through the world's four continents.

Every village family shut fast its gates,

While boys and girls all fled for cover.

Black clouds blotted out the Milky Way;

Lamps lost their brightness and the world went dark.

Pig was shaking with terror. He lay on the ground, rooted into the earth with his snout and buried his head. He looked as if he had been nailed there. Friar Sand covered his face and could not keep his eyes open. Monkey knew from the sound of the wind that the demon was in it. A moment later, when the wind had passed, all that could be vaguely made out in the sky were two lamps.

"Brothers," he said, looking down, "the wind's finished. Get up and look." The idiot tugged his snout out, brushed the dirt off himself and looked up into the sky, where he saw the two lamps.

"What a laugh," Pig said, laughing aloud, "What a laugh. It's an evil spirit with good manners. Let's make friends with it."

"It's a very dark night," said Friar Sand, "and you haven't even seen it, so how can you tell whether it's good or bad?"

"As they used to say in the old days," Pig replied, "'Take a candle when you're out at night, and stay where you are if you haven't one.' You can see that it's got a pair of lanterns to light its way. It must be a good spirit."

"You're wrong," Friar Sand said. "That's not a pair of lanterns: they're the demon's eyes." This gave the idiot such a fright that he shrank three inches.

"Heavens," he said. "If its eyes are that size goodness knows how big its mouth is."

"Don't be scared, brother," said Monkey. "You two guard the master while I go up and see what sort of mood it's in and what kind of evil spirit it is."

"Brother," said Pig, "don't tell the monster about us."

Chapter 67

Splendid Monkey sprang up into mid–air with a whistle. "Not so fast," he yelled at the top of his voice, brandishing his cudgel, "not so fast. I'm here." When the monster saw him it took a firm stance and began to wield a long spear furiously.

Parrying with his cudgel, Monkey asked, "What part do you come from, monster? Where are you an evil spirit?" The monster ignored the questions and continued with its spearplay. Monkey asked again, and again there was no answer as the wild spearplay continued.

"So it's deaf and dumb," Monkey smiled to himself. "Don't run away! Take this!" Unperturbed, the monster parried the cudgel with more wild spearplay. The mid–air battle ebbed and flowed until the middle of the night as first one then the other was on top, but still there was no victor. Pig and Friar Sand had a very clear view from the Li family courtyard, and they could see that the demon was only using its spear

to defend itself and not making any attacks, while Monkey's cudgel was never far from the demon's head.

"Friar Sand," said Pig with a grin, "you keep guard here. I'm going up to join in the fight. I'm not going to let Monkey keep all the credit for beating the monster to himself. He won't be the first to be given a drink."

The splendid idiot leapt up on his cloud and joined in the fight, taking a swing with his rake. The monster fended this off with another spear. The two spears were like flying snakes or flashes of lightning. Pig was full of admiration.

"This evil spirit is a real expert with the spears. This isn't 'behind the mountain' spearplay; it's 'tangled thread'

spearplay. It's not Ma Family style. It's what's called soft–shaft style."

"Don't talk such nonsense, idiot," said Monkey. "There's no such thing as soft–shaft style."

"Just look," Pig replied. "He's parrying us with the blades. You can't see the shafts. I don't know where he's hiding them."

"All right then," said Monkey, "perhaps there is a soft–shaft style. But this monster can't talk. I suppose it's not yet humanized: it's still got a lot of the negative about it. Tomorrow morning, when the positive is dominant, it's bound to run away. When it does we've got to catch up with it and not let it go."

"Yes, yes," said Pig.

When the fight had gone on for a long time the East grew light. The monster didn't dare fight any longer, so it turned and fled, with Monkey and Pig both after it. Suddenly they smelled the putrid and overwhelming stench of Runny Persimmon Lane on Mount Seven Perfections.

"Some family must be emptying its cesspit," said Pig. "Phew! What a horrible stink!"

Holding his nose, Brother Monkey said, "After the demon, after the demon!" The monster went over the mountain and turned back into himself: a giant red–scaled python. Just look at it: Eyes shooting stars,

Nostrils gushing clouds,

Teeth like close – set blades of steel,

Chapter 67

935

Journey to the West

Curving claws like golden hooks.

On its head a horn of flesh

Like a thousand pieces of agate;

Its body clad in scales of red

Like countless patches of rouge.

When coiled on the ground it might seem a brocade quilt;

When flying it could be mistaken for a rainbow.

From where it sleeps a stench rises to the heavens,

And in movement its body is wreathed in red clouds.

Is it big?

A man could not be seen from one side to the other.

Is it long?

It can span a mountain from North to South.

"So it's a long snake," Pig said. "If it's a man – eater it could gobble up five hundred for a meal and still not be full."

"Its soft – shafted spears are its forked tongue," said Monkey. "It's exhausted by the chase. Attack it from behind." Pig leapt up and went for it, hitting it with his rake. The monster dived into a cave, but still left seven or eight feet of tail sticking outside.

Pig threw down his rake, grabbed it and shouted, "Hold on, hold on!" He pulled with all his strength, but could not move it an inch.

"Idiot," laughed Monkey, "let it go in. We'll find a way of dealing with

it. Don't pull so wildly at the snake."

When Pig let go the monster contracted itself and burrowed inside.

"But we had half of it before I let go," he grumbled. "Now it's shrunk and gone inside we're never going to get it out. We've lost the snake, haven't we?"

"The wretched creature is enormous and the cave is very narrow," Monkey replied. "It won't possibly be able to turn round in there. It definitely went straight inside, so the cave must have an exit at the other end for it to get out through. Hurry round and block the back door while I attack at the front."

The idiot shot round to the other side of the mountain, where there was indeed another hole that he blocked with his foot. But he had not steadied himself when Monkey thrust his cudgel in at the front of the cave, hurting the monster so much that it wriggled out through the back. Pig was not ready, and when a flick of the Chapter 67

snake's tail knocked him over he could not get back up: he lay on the ground in agony. Seeing that the cave was now empty Monkey rushed round to the other side, cudgel in hand, to catch the monster. Monkey's shouts made Pig feel so ashamed that he pulled himself to his feet despite the pain and started lashing out wildly with his rake.

At the sight of this Monkey said with a laugh, "What do you think you're hitting? The monster's got away."

"I'm 'beating the grass to flush out the snake.'"

"Cretin!" said Monkey, "After it!"

The two of them crossed a ravine, where they saw the monster coiled up, its head held high and its enormous mouth gaping wide. It was about to devour Pig, who fled in terror. Monkey, however, went straight on towards it and was swallowed in a single gulp.

"Brother," wailed Pig, stamping his feet and beating his chest, "you've been destroyed."

"Don't fret, Pig," called Monkey from inside the monster's belly, which

he was poking around with his cudgel.

"I'll make it into a bridge. Watch!" As he spoke the monster arched its back just like a rainbow – shaped bridge.

"It looks like a bridge all right," Pig shouted, "but nobody would ever dare cross it."

"Then I'll make it turn into a boat," said Monkey. "Watch!" He pushed out the skin of the monster's belly with his cudgel, and with the skin against the ground and its head uplifted it did look like a river boat.

"It may look like a boat," said Pig, "but without a mast or sail it wouldn't sail very well in the wind."

"Get out of the way then," said Monkey, "and I'll make it sail for you." He then jabbed his cudgel out as hard as he could through the monster's spine from the inside and made it stand some sixty or seventy feet high, just like a mast. Struggling for its life and in great pain the monster shot forward faster than the wind, going down the mountain and back the way it had come for over seven miles until it collapsed motionless in the dust. It was dead.

When Pig caught up with the monster he raised his rake and struck wildly at it. Monkey made a big hole in the monster's side, crawled out and said, "Idiot! It's dead and that's that. Why go on hitting it?"

"Brother," Pig replied, "don't you realize that all my life I've loved killing dead snakes?" Only then did he put his rake away, grab the snake's tail and start pulling it backwards.

Meanwhile back at Tuoluo Village old Mr. Li and the others were saying to the Tang Priest, "Your two disciples have been gone all night, and they're not back yet. They must be dead."

"I'm sure that there can be no problem," Sanzang replied. "Let's go and look." A moment later Monkey and Pig appeared, chanting as they dragged an enormous python behind them. Only then did everyone feel happy.

All the people in the village, young and old, male and female, knelt down and bowed to Sanzang, saying,

"Good sirs, this is the evil spirit that has been doing so much damage. Now that you have used your powers to behead the demon and rid us of this evil we will be able to live in peace again." Everyone was very

grateful, and all the families invited them to meals as expressions of their gratitude, keeping master and disciples there for six or seven days, and only letting them go when they implored to be allowed to leave. As they would not accept money or any other gifts the villagers loaded parched grain and fruit on horses and mules hung with

red rosettes and caparisoned with flags of many colours to see them on their way. From the five hundred households in the village some seven or eight hundred people set out with them.

On the journey they were all very cheerful, but before they reached Runny Persimmon Lane on Mount Seven Perfections Sanzang smelled the terrible stench and could see that their way was blocked.

"Wukong," he said to Monkey, "how are we going to get through?"

"It's going to be hard," replied Monkey, covering his nose. When even Monkey said that it was going to be hard Sanzang began to weep.

"Don't upset yourself so, my lord," said old Mr. Li and the other elders as they came up to him. "We have all come here with you because we're already decided what to do. As your illustrious disciples have defeated the evil spirit and rid the village of this evil we have all made up our minds to clear a better path for you over the mountain."

"That's nonsense, old man," said Monkey with a grin. "You told us before that the mountain is some 250 miles across. You aren't Yu the Great's heavenly soldiers, so how could you possibly make a path across it? If my master is to get across it'll have to be through our efforts. You'll never do it."

"But how can we do it through our efforts?" Sanzang asked after dismounting.

"It'd certainly be hard to cross the mountain as it is now," Monkey said, still smiling, "and it would be even harder to cut a new path. We'll have to go by the old lane. The only thing that worries me is that there may be nobody to provide the food."

"What a thing to say, venerable sir," old Mr. Li said. "We can support you gentlemen for as long as you care to stay here. You can't say that

nobody will provide the food."

"In that case, go and prepare two hundredweight of parched grain, as well as some steamed cakes and buns,"

said Monkey. "When our long–snouted monk has eaten his fill he'll turn into a giant boar and clear the old lane with his snout. Then my master will be able to ride his horse over the mountain while we support him.

He'll certainly get across."

"Brother," said Pig, "you want to keep all the rest of you clean. Why should I be the only one to stink?"

"Wuneng," said Sanzang, "if you can clear the lane with your snout and get me across the mountain that will be a very great good deed to your credit."

"Master, benefactors, please don't tease me," said Pig with a smile. "I can do thirty–six transformations. If you ask me to become something that's light or delicate or beautiful or that flies I just can't. But ask me to turn into a mountain, a tree, a rock, a mound of earth, an elephant, a hog, a water buffalo or a camel and I can manage any of them. The only thing is that the bigger I make myself the bigger my belly gets. I can't do things properly unless it's full."

"We've got plenty," the people said, "We've got plenty. We've brought parched grain, fruit, griddle cakes and ravioli. We were going to give them to you when we'd made a path across the mountain. They can all be brought out for you to eat now. When you've transformed yourself and started work we'll send some people back to prepare more food to send you on your way with." Pig was beside himself with delight.

Chapter 67

938

Journey to the West

Taking off his tunic and putting down his nine–pronged rake he said to them all, "Don't laugh at me. Just watch while I win merit doing this filthy job." The splendid idiot made a spell with his hands, shook himself, and turned himself into a giant hog. Indeed:

His snout was long, his bristles short, and half of him was fat; As a

piglet in the mountains he had fed on herbs and simples.

Black was his face and his eyes as round as sun or moon;

The great ears on his head were just like plantain leaves.

His bones he'd made so strong he would live as long as heaven; His thick skin had been tempered till it was hard as iron.

He grunted with a noise that came from a blocked – up nose;

His gasping breath rasped harshly in his throat.

Each of his four white trotters was a thousand feet high;

Every sword – like bristle was hundreds of yards in length.

Since pigs were first kept and fattened by mankind

Never had such a monster porker been seen as this today.

The Tang Priest and the rest were full of admiration

For Marshal Tian Peng and his magic powers.

Seeing what Pig had turned into, Brother Monkey asked the people who had come to see them off to pile up all the parched grain at once and told Pig to eat it. Not caring whether it was cooked or raw, the idiot downed it all at one gulp, then went forward to clear the way. Monkey told Friar Sand to take his sandals off and carry the luggage carefully and advised his master to sit firm in the carved saddle.

Then he took off his own tall boots and told everyone else to go back: "Could you be very kind and send some more food as soon as possible to keep my brother's strength up?"

Of the seven or eight hundred who were seeing the pilgrims off most had come on mules or horse and they rushed back to the village like shooting stars. The three hundred who were on foot stood at the bottom of the mountain to watch the travelers as they went away. Now it was ten miles or more from the village to the mountain, and another journey of over ten miles each way to fetch the food, making over thirty in all, so by the time they were back master and disciples were already far ahead of them. Not wanting to miss the pilgrims, the villagers drove their mules and horses into the lane and carried on after them through the night, only catching them up the next morning.

"Pilgrims," they shouted, "wait a moment, wait a moment, sirs. We've brought food for you." When Sanzang heard this he thanked them profusely, said that they were good and faithful people, and told Pig to rest and eat something to build up his strength. The idiot, who was on the second day of clearing the way with his snout, was by now ravenously hungry. The villagers had brought much more than seven or eight hundredweight of food, which he scooped up and devoured all at once, not caring whether it was rice or wheat. When he had eaten his fill he went back to clearing the way, while Sanzang, Monkey and Friar Sand thanked the villagers and took leave of them. Indeed:

The peasants all went back to Tuoluo Village;

Across the mountain Pig had cleared the way.

Sanzang's faith was backed up by great power;

Sun's demon–quelling arts were on display.

A thousand years of filth went in a single morning;

The Seven Perfections Lane was opened up today,

The dirt of six desires all now removed,

Towards the Lotus Throne they go to pray.

If you don't know how much longer their journey was going to be or what evil monsters they would meet listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 68

In the Land of Purpuria the Tang Priest Discusses History

Sun the Pilgrim in His Charity Offers to Be a Doctor

When good is right all causes disappear;

Its fame is spread through all four continents.

In the light of wisdom they climb the other shore;

Soughing dark clouds are blown from the edge of the sky.

All the Buddhas give them help,

Sitting for ever on their thrones of jade.

Chapter 68

940

Journey to the West

Smash the illusions of the human world,

Cease!

Cleanse the dirt; provoke no misery.

The story tells how Sanzang and his disciples cleaned the lane of its filth and pressed far ahead along the road.

Time passed quickly and the weather was scorching again. Indeed:
The begonias spread their globes of brocade;

Lotus leaves split their own green dishes.

Fledgling swallows hide in the roadside willows;

Travelers wave their silken fans for relief from the heat.

As they carried on their way a walled and moated city appeared before them. Reining in his horse, Sanzang, said, "Disciples, can you see where this is?"

"You can't read, Master," Monkey exclaimed. "How ever did you get the Tang Emperor to send you on this mission?"

"I have been a monk since I was a boy and read classics and scriptures by the thousand," Sanzang replied.

"How could you say I can't read?"

"Well," Monkey replied, "if you can, why ask where we are instead of reading the big clear writing on the apricot–yellow flag over the city wall?"

"Wretched ape," Sanzang shouted, "you're talking nonsense. The flag is flapping much too hard in the wind for anyone to read what, if anything, is on it."

"Then how could I read it?" Monkey asked.

"Don't rise to his bait, Master," Pig and Friar Sand said. "From this distance we can't even see the walls and moat clearly, never mind words in a banner."

"But doesn't it say Purpuria?" Monkey asked.

"Purpuria must be a Western kingdom," Sanzang said. "We shall have to present our passport."

"Goes without saying," Monkey observed.

They were soon outside the city gates, where the master dismounted, crossed the bridge, and went in through the triple gates. It was indeed a splendid metropolis. This is what could be seen: Chapter 68

Lofty gate – towers,

Regular battlements,

Living waters flowing around,

Mountains facing to North and South.

Many are the goods in the streets and markets,

And all the citizens do thriving business.

This is a city fit for a monarch.

A capital endowed by heaven.

To this distant realm come travelers by land and water;

Jade and silk abound in this remoteness.

It is more beautiful than the distant ranges;

The palace rises to the purity of space.

Closely barred are the passes leading here,

When peace and prosperity have lasted for ever.

As master and disciples walked along the highways and through the markets they saw that the people were tall, neatly dressed and well spoken. Indeed, they were not inferior to those of the Great Tang. When the traders who stood on either side of the road saw how ugly Pig was, how tall and dark – featured Friar Sand was, and how hairy and wide – browed Monkey was they all dropped their business and came over to see them.

"Don't provoke trouble," Sanzang called to them. "Hold your heads down." Pig obediently tucked his snout into his chest and Friar Sand did not dare look up. Monkey, however, stared all around him as he kept close to the Tang Priest. The more sensible people went away again after taking a look, but the idlers, the curious and the naughty children among the spectators jeered, threw bricks and tiles at the strangers, and mocked Pig.

"Whatever you do, don't get into a row," Sanzang said again in great anxiety. The idiot kept his head down.

Before long they turned a corner and saw a gate in a wall over which was written HOSTEL OF MEETING in large letters. "We are going into this government office," Sanzang said.

"Why?" Monkey asked.

"The Hostel of Meeting is a place where people from all over the world are received, so we can go and disturb them," said Sanzang. "Let's rest there. When I have seen the king and presented our passport we can leave the Chapter 68

city and be on our way again." When Pig heard this he brought his snout out, so terrifying the people following behind that dozens of them collapsed.

"The master's right," said Pig, stepping forward. "Let's shelter inside there and get away from these damned mockers." They went inside, after which the people began to disperse.

There were two commissioners in the hostel, a senior one and his assistant, and they were in the hall checking over their personnel before going to receive an official when, to their great consternation, the Tang Priest suddenly appeared.

"Who are you?" they asked together. "Who are you? Where are you going?"

"I have been sent by His Majesty the Tang Emperor to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven," the Tang Priest replied, putting his hands together in front of his chest. "Having reached your illustrious country I did not dare to try to sneak through. I would like to submit my passport for inspection so that we may be allowed to continue our way. Meanwhile we would like to rest in your splendid hostel."

When the two commissioners heard this they dismissed their subordinates, put on their full official dress and went down from the main hall to greet the visitors. They instructed that the guest rooms be tidied up for them to sleep in and ordered vegetarian provisions for them. Sanzang thanked them, and the two officials led their staff out of the hall. Some of their attendants invited the visitors to sleep in the guest rooms.

Sanzang went with them, but Monkey complained bitterly, "Damned cheek. Why won't they let me stay in the main hall?"

"The people here don't come under the jurisdiction of our Great Tang and they have no connections with our country either. Besides, their superiors often come to stay. It is difficult for them to entertain us."

"In that case." Monkey replied, "I insist on them entertaining us properly."

As they were talking the manager brought their provisions: a dish each of white rice and wheat flour, two cabbages, four pieces of beancurd, two pieces of wheat gluten, a dish of dried bamboo shoots and a dish of

"tree–ear" fungus. Sanzang told his disciples to receive the provisions and thanked the manager.

"There's a clean cooking–stove in the Western room," the manager said, "and it's easy to light the firewood in it. Would you please cook your own food?"

"May I ask you if the king is in the palace?" Sanzang asked.

"His Majesty has not attended court for a long time," the manager replied. "But today is an auspicious one, and he is discussing the issue of a notice with his civil and military officials. You'd better hurry if you want to get there in time to submit your passport to him. Tomorrow will be too late to do it, and goodness knows how long you'll have to wait."

"Wukong," said Sanzang, "you three prepare the meal while I hurry there to have our passport inspected. After we have eaten we can be on our way." Pig quickly unpacked the cassock and passport for Sanzang, who dressed himself and set out for the palace, instructing his disciples not to leave the hostel or make trouble.

Before long the Tang Priest was outside the Tower of Five Phoenixes at the outer palace gate. The towering majesty of the halls and the splendor of the tall buildings and terraces beggared description. When he reached the main Southern gate he requested the reporting officer to announce to the court his wish to have his Chapter 68

passport inspected.

The eunuch officer at the gate went to the steps of the throne, where he submitted the following memorial:

"There is a monk at the palace gate sent by the Great Tang in the East to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures at the Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven. He wishes to submit his passport for approval. I await Your Majesty's command."

When the king heard this he replied happily, "For a long time we have been too ill to sit on our throne. Today we are in the throne room to issue a notice sending for doctors, and now a distinguished monk has arrived in our country." He ordered that the monk be summoned to the steps of the throne. Sanzang abased himself in reverence. The king then summoned him into the throne room, invited him to sit down, and ordered the department of foreign relations to arrange a vegetarian meal. Sanzang thanked the king for his kindness and presented his passport.

When he had read it through the king said with great delight, "Master

of the Law, how many dynasties have ruled in your land of Great Tang? How many generations of wise ministers have there been? After what illness did the Tang emperor come back to life, so that he sent you on this long and difficult journey to fetch the scriptures?"

On being asked all these questions the venerable elder bowed, put his hands together and said, "In my country, The Three Emperors ruled,

The Five Rulers established morality.

Yao and Shun took the throne,

Yu and Tang gave the people peace.

Many were the offspring of Chengzhou

Who each established their own states,

Bullying the weak with their own strength,

Dividing the realm and proclaiming themselves rulers.

Eighteen such lords of local states

Divided the territory up to the borders.

Later they became a dozen,

Bringing peace to the cosmic order.

But those who had no chariots of war

Were swallowed up by others.

When the seven great states contended

Six of them had to surrender to Qin.

Heaven gave birth to Liu Bang and Xiang Yu,

Each of whom cherished wicked ideas.

The empire then belonged to Han

According to the stipulations agreed between the two.

Power passed from Han to the Sima clan,

Till Jin in its turn fell into chaos.

Twelve states ruled in North and South,

Among them Song, Qi, Liang and Chen.

Emperors ruled in succession to each other

Till the Great Sui restored the true unity.

Then it indulged in evil and wickedness.

Inflicting misery on the common people.

Our present rulers, the House of Li,

Have given the name of Tang to the state.

Since the High Ancestor passed on the throne

The reigning monarch has been Li Shimin.

The rivers have run clear and the seas been calm

Thanks to his great virtue and his benevolence.

North of the city of Chang'an

Lived a wicked river dragon

Who gave the timely rain in short measure,

For which he deserved to pay with his death.

One night he came in a dream to the emperor,

Asking the monarch to spare his life.

Chapter 68

The emperor promised to grant a pardon

And sent for his wise minister early next day.

He kept him there inside the palace,

Filling his time with a long game of chess.

But at high noon the minister

Slept, and in a dream cut off the dragon's head."

On hearing this the king groaned and asked, "Master of the Law, which country did that wise minister come from?"

"He was our emperor's prime minister Wei Zheng, astrologer, geographer, master of the Yin and Yang, and one of the great founders and stabilizers of our state," Sanzang explained. "Because he beheaded the Dragon King of the Jing River in his dream, the dragon brought a case in the Underworld against our emperor for having him decapitated after granting a pardon. The emperor became very ill and his condition was critical.

Wei Zhang wrote him a letter to take to the Underworld and give to Cui Jue, the judge of Fengdu. Soon after that the emperor died, only to come back to life on the third day. It was thanks to Wei Zheng that Judge Cui was persuaded to alter a document and give His Majesty an extra twenty years of life. He held a great Land and Water Mass and dispatched me on this long journey to visit many lands, worship the Buddha and fetch the Three Stores of Mahayana scriptures that will raise all the sufferers from evil up to Heaven."

At this the king groaned and sighed again. "Yours is indeed a heavenly dynasty and a great nation," he said,

"with a just ruler and wise ministers. We have long been ill, but not one minister do we have who will save us." On hearing this the venerable elder stole a glance at the king and saw that his face was sallow and emaciated; his appearance was going to pieces and his spirits were very low. The venerable elder was going to ask him some questions when an official of the department of Foreign relations came to invite the Tang Priest to eat. The king ordered that his food should be set out with Sanzang's in the Hall of Fragrance so that he could eat with the Master of the Law. Thanking the king for his kindness

Sanzang took his meal with him.

Meanwhile, back in the Hostel of Meeting, Brother Monkey told Friar Sand to prepare the tea, the grain and the vegetarian dishes. "There's no problem about the tea and the rice," Friar Sand said, "but the vegetable dishes will be difficult."

"Why?" Monkey asked.

"There's no oil, salt, soya sauce or vinegar," Friar Sand replied.

"I've got a few coins here," Monkey said, "so we can send Pig out to buy them."

"I wouldn't dare," said the idiot, who was feeling too lazy to go. "My ugly mug could cause trouble, and then the master would blame me."

Chapter 68

"If you buy the stuff at a fair price and don't try to get it by asking for alms or theft there couldn't possibly by any trouble," said Brother Monkey.

"Didn't you see the commotion just now?" asked Pig. "I only showed my snout outside the gate and about a dozen of them collapsed with fright. Goodness only knows how many I'd scare to death in a busy shopping street."

"Well," said Monkey, "as you know so much about the busy shopping streets did you notice what was being sold in them?"

"No," said Pig. "The master told me to keep my head down and cause no trouble. Honest, I didn't see anything."

"I won't need to tell you about the bars, grain merchants, mills, silk shops and grocers," said Monkey. "But there are marvellous teahouses and noodle shops selling big sesame buns and steamed bread. You can buy terrific soup, rice, spices and vegetables in the restaurants. Then there are all the exotic cakes, yogurts, snacks, rolls, fries, and honey sweets. Any number of goodies. Shall I go out and buy you some?"

This description had the idiot drooling; the saliva gurgled in his throat. "Brother," he said, jumping to his feet,

"I'll let you pay this time. Next time I'm in the money I'll treat you."

"Friar Sand," said Monkey, hiding his amusement, "cook the rice while I go out to buy some other ingredients."

Realizing that Monkey was only fooling the idiot, Friar Sand agreed. "Off you go," he said. "Buy plenty and have a good feed." Grabbing a bowl and a dish the idiot went out with Monkey.

"Where are you reverend gentlemen going?" two officials asked him.

"To buy some groceries," Monkey replied.

"Go West along this street, turn at the drum tower, and you'll be at Zheng's grocery," they said. "You can buy as much oil, salt, soya sauce, vinegar, ginger, pepper and tea as you like there: they've got them all."

The two of them headed West along the road hand in hand. Monkey went past several teahouses and restaurants but did not buy any of the things on sale or eat any of the food. "Brother," called Pig, "why don't we make do with what we can buy here?" This was the last thing that Monkey, who had only been fooling him, intended to do.

"My dear brother," he said, "you don't know how to get a good bargain. If we go a little further you can choose bigger ones." As the two of them were talking a lot of people followed jostling behind them. Before long they reached the drum tower, where a huge and noisy crowd was pushing and shoving and filling the whole road.

"I'm not going any further, brother," said Pig when he saw this. "From the way they're shouting they sound as though they're out to catch monks. And we're suspicious–looking strangers. What'll we do if they arrest us?"

"Stop talking such nonsense," said Monkey. "We monks haven't broken the law, so monk–catchers would have no reason to arrest us. Let's carry on and buy the ingredients we need at Zheng's."

Chapter 68

"No," said Pig, "never. I'm not going to ask for trouble. If I try to

squeeze through that crowd and my ears get pulled out to their full length they'll collapse with fright. Several of them might get trampled to death, and it would cost me my life."

"Very well then," said Monkey. "You stand at the foot of this wall while I go and buy the things. I'll bring you back some wheaten cakes." The idiot handed the bowl and dish to Monkey then stood with his back to the crowd and his snout against the foot of the wall. He would not have moved for anything in the world.

When Monkey reached the drum tower he found that the crowds really were very dense. As he squeezed his way through them he heard people saying that a royal proclamation had been posted at the tower: this was what all the people were struggling to see. Monkey pushed forward till he was close to it, then opened wide his fiery eyes with golden pupils to read it carefully. This is what was written: We, the King of Purpuria in the Western Continent of Cattle – gift, from the beginning of our reign gave peace to the four quarters and tranquillity to the people. Recently the state's misfortunes have confined us to our bed with a chronic illness that has continued for a very long time. Recovery has proved impossible, and the many excellent prescriptions of our country's Royal College of Medicine have not yet effected a cure. We hereby issue an invitation to all experts in medicine and pharmacy among the wise men of the world, whether from the North or the East, from China or from foreign countries, to ascend to the throne hall and heal our sickness, in the event of a recovery we will give half our kingdom. This is no empty promise. All those who can offer cures should come to this notice.

When Monkey had read this he exclaimed with delight, "As they used to say in the old days, 'Make a move and your fortune's one third made.' I was wrong to stay put in the hostel. There's no need to buy groceries, and fetching the scriptures can wait for a day while I go and have a bit of fun as a doctor." The splendid Great Sage bent low, got rid of the bowl and dish, took a pinch of dust, threw it into the air, said the words of a spell and made himself invisible. He then went up to the notice, quietly took it down, and blew towards the Southeast with a magic breath.

Immediately a whirlwind arose that scattered all the people there. Monkey then went straight back to where Pig was standing, his nose propped against the foot of the wall as if he were fast asleep. Brother Monkey folded the notice up, slipped it inside the lapel of Pig's tunic without disturbing him, turned and went back to the hostel.

As soon as the whirlwind started blowing all the people in the crowd at the foot of the drum tower covered their heads and shut their eyes, never imagining that when the wind fell the royal proclamation would have disappeared. They were horrorstruck. That morning twelve palace eunuchs and twelve guards officers had come out to post it, and now it had been blown away after less than six hours. In fear and trembling the people searched all around for it until a piece of paper was spotted sticking out of Pig's lapel.

"So you took the proclamation down, did you?" they asked, going up to him.

Looking up with a start the idiot thrust his nose up at them, making the guards officers stagger about and collapse with terror. He turned to flee, only to be grabbed by several bold spirits who blocked his way.

"You've taken down the royal proclamation inviting doctors, so you're coming to the palace to cure His Majesty," they said. "Where else d'you think you're going?"

"I'm your son if I tore the poster down," said Pig in panic. "I'd be your grandson if I could cure disease."

Chapter 68

948

Journey to the West

"What's that sticking out of your tunic?" one of the officers asked.

Only then did the idiot look down and see that there really was a piece of paper there. Opening it he ground his teeth and swore, "That macaque is trying to get me killed!" He gave an angry roar and was just about to tear it up when they all stopped him.

"You're a dead man," they said. "That's a proclamation His Majesty issued today. How dare you tear it up? As you've put it in your tunic you're no doubt a brilliant doctor. Come with us at once!"

"You don't understand," shouted Pig. "It wasn't me that took it down. It was my fellow disciple Sun Wukong.

He sneaked it into my tunic then abandoned me. We'll all have to go and find him to get to the bottom of this."

"Nonsense," they said. "We've got a bell here— —we're not going off to play one that's still being cast. You can say what you like. Drag him off to see His Majesty." Not bothering to get to the truth of the matter they pushed and pulled the idiot, who stood his ground as firmly as if he had taken root there. Over ten of them tried to move him without any success. "You've got no respect," said Pig. "If you go on pulling at me and make me lose my temper I'll go berserk, and don't blame me then."

It had not taken long for this commotion to stir up the whole neighbourhood, and Pig was now surrounded.

Two elderly palace eunuchs in the crowd said, "You look very odd and you sound wrong too. Where are you from, you ruffian?"

"We're pilgrims sent from the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven," Pig replied. "My master is the younger brother of the Tang emperor and a Master of the Law. He's just gone to the palace to hand his passport over for inspection. I came here with my brother disciple to buy some groceries, but there were so many people by the tower that I was scared to go any further. He told me to wait here. When he saw the proclamation he made a whirlwind, took it down, sneaked it into my tunic and went away."

"We did see a monk with a plump white face going in through the palace gates," one of the eunuchs said.

"Perhaps that was your master."

"Yes, yes," said Pig.

"Where did your fellow disciple go?" the eunuch asked.

"There are four of us altogether," said Pig. "When the master went to present his passport the other three of us stayed with our luggage and our horse in the Hostel of Meeting. My brother's played a trick on me and gone back there ahead of me."

"Let go of him, officers," the eunuch said. "We'll all go to the hostel together and find out what's really happening."

"You two ladies are very sensible," said Pig.

"Monk, you don't know about anything," said the officers. "How can you address gentlemen as ladies?"

"You're shameless," laughed Pig. "You've made them change sex. Fancy calling these two old females gentlemen instead of women or ladies!"

"That's enough of your insolence," they all said. "Find your fellow disciple at once."

Chapter 68

949

Journey to the West

The noisy crowd in the street, which was not to be numbered in mere hundreds, carried him to the hostel gates. "Don't come any further, gentlemen," Pig said. "My brother won't let you make a fool of him the way I do. He's a ferocious and serious character. When you meet him you'll have to bow deeply to him and call him

'Lord Sun,' then he'll look after you. If you don't he'll turn nasty and this business will fail."

To this the eunuchs and officers replied, "If your brother really has the power to cure our king he'll be given half the country and we will all bow to him."

The idlers were still making a commotion outside the hostel gates as Pig led the eunuchs and officers straight inside, where Monkey could be heard laughing with pleasure as he told Friar Sand about how he had taken the proclamation down.

Pig went up to him, grabbed him and yelled, "Why won't you act like a man? You said you'd buy me noodles, buns, and steamed bread to lure me out, but it was only an empty promise. Then you made a whirlwind, took down the royal proclamation, and sneakily put it in my tunic. You made a real idiot of me. What kind of brother are you?"

"Idiot," laughed Monkey, "you must have got lost and gone the wrong way. I couldn't find you when I rushed back from buying the groceries the other side of the drum tower, so I came back ahead. Where did I tear any royal proclamations down?"

"The officials who were guarding it are here," said Pig.

Before he had finished speaking the eunuchs and officers came up, bowed low and said, "Lord Sun, His Majesty is very fortunate today as Heaven has sent you down to us. We are sure that you will display

your great skill and give him the benefit of your outstanding medical knowledge. If you cure our king you will receive half the country and half the state." On hearing this Monkey composed his face, took the proclamation from Pig and said, "I suppose you are the officials who were guarding the notice."

"We slaves are eunuchs in the Bureau of Ritual," said the eunuchs, kowtowing, "and these gentlemen are officers in the royal guard."

"I did take the royal proclamation down," Monkey said, "and I used my younger brother to bring you here. So your lord is ill. As the saying goes, 'Don't sell medicine carelessly, and don't send for any old doctor when you're ill.' Tell your king to come here and ask me himself to help him. I can get rid of his illness at a touch."

This shocked all the eunuchs.

"That is very big talk, so you must be a man of great breadth of spirit," the officers said. "Half of us will remain here to press the invitation in silence while the other half go back to the palace to report."

Four of the eunuchs and six of the guards officers went straight into the palace without waiting to be summoned and said at the steps of the throne room, "Congratulations, Your Majesty."

When the king, who was in the middle of a cultivated conversation with Sanzang after their meal together, heard this he asked, "What on?"

"When we, your slaves, took out Your Majesty's proclamation sending for doctors this morning and posted it at the foot of the drum tower, a holy monk from Great Tang in the East took it down," they replied. "He is now in the Hostel of Meeting and wants Your Majesty to go in person to ask his help. He can get rid of illness at a touch. That is why we have come to submit this report."

This news delighted the king. "How many distinguished disciples do you have, Master of the Law?" he asked.

Putting his hands together in front of his chest Sanzang replied, "I

have three stupid followers."

"Which of them is a medical expert?" the king asked.

"To be frank with Your Majesty," Sanzang replied, "they are all country bumpkins fit only for carrying baggage, leading the horse, finding their way along streams, or leading me over mountains and rivers. In dangerous places they can defeat monsters, capture demons, and subdue tigers and dragons. None of them knows anything about medicines."

"Aren't you being too hard on them?" the king asked. "It was very fortunate that you came to court when we entered the throne hall this morning: this was surely destined by Heaven. If your disciple knows nothing about medicine why would he have taken down our proclamation and demanded that we go to greet him in person?

He must surely be a great physician."

He then called, "Civilian and military officers, we are much too weak to ride in our carriage. You must all leave the palace and go on our behalf to invite the Venerable Sun to treat our disease. When you meet him you must on no account show him any disrespect. You must address him as 'Holy monk, Venerable Sun' and treat him with the deference due to your own sovereign."

Having received these orders the officials went straight to the Hostel of Meeting with the eunuchs and guards officers responsible for the proclamation. There they arranged themselves in their companies to kowtow to Monkey. Pig was so frightened that he hid in the wing, while Friar Sand slipped behind the wall. Just look at the Great Sage sitting solemnly and unmoving in the middle of the room.

"That macaque is really asking to have his head cut off," Pig thought resentfully. "All those officials bowing to him, and he's not bowing back or standing up either."

Soon afterwards, when the rituals had been performed, the officials addressed Monkey as if he were their monarch: "We report to the holy monk, the Venerable Sun, that we officials of the Kingdom of Purpuria have come at the command of our king to do respectful homage to the holy monk and invite him to the palace to treat our sick king."

Only then did Brother Monkey stand up and reply, "Why hasn't your king come?"

"His Majesty is too weak to ride in his carriage," the officials all replied, "which is why he ordered us to pay homage to you, holy monk, as if you were our sovereign, kowtow to you and invite you to come."

"In that case," said Monkey, "will you gentlemen please lead the way. I'll follow you." The officials then formed themselves into a column in accordance with their ranks and set out. Monkey tidied his clothes and got to his feet.

"Brother," said Pig, "whatever you do, don't drag us in."

"I won't," Monkey replied, "provided you two accept the medicine for me."

"What medicine?" Friar Sand asked.

"You must accept all the medicine people send me," Monkey replied. "I'll collect it when I come back." The two of them undertook this commission.

Chapter 68

951

Journey to the West

Monkey was soon at the palace with the officials, who went in first to inform the king. He raised high the curtains of pearls, flashed his dragon and phoenix eyes, opened his golden mouth and spoke majestically,

"Which gentleman is the holy monk, the Venerable Sun?"

Taking a step forward, Monkey shouted at the top of his voice, "I am."

The voice was so ugly and the face so hideous that the king fell back on his dragon throne. In their alarm the female officials and the palace eunuchs helped him to the inner quarters.

"He's terrified His Majesty to death," they said.

"Monk," all the officials said angrily to Monkey, "how could you be so rough and crude? Why did you dare take the proclamation down?"

When Brother Monkey heard this he replied with a smile, "You shouldn't be angry with me. If you're going to be so rude to me your

king won't get better in a thousand years."

"But how long does human life last?" the officials asked. "How is it that he won't get better even in a thousand years?"

"He's a sick ruler now," said Monkey. "When he dies he'll be a sick ghost, and whenever he's reincarnated he'll be a sick man again. That's why he won't get better even in a thousand years."

"You've got no sense of respect at all," the infuriated officials replied. "How dare you talk such nonsense!"

"It's not nonsense," Monkey laughed. "Listen and I'll explain:

"Mysterious indeed are the principles of medicine;

Flexibility of mind is a quality required.

Use eyes and ears, ask questions, take the pulses:

Omit but one and the examination's incomplete.

First look for outward signs of the patient's vital energy.

Dried? Smooth? Fat? Thin? Active? Does he sleep well?

Secondly, listen to whether the voice is clear or harsh:

Determine if the words he speaks are true or crazed.

Third, you must ask how long the disease has lasted,

And how the patient eats, drinks and relieves himself.

Chapter 68

Fourth, feel the pulses and be clear about the veins:

Are they deep, shallow, external or inside?

Should I not look and listen, ask questions, and take the pulses, Never in all his days will the king be well again."

In the ranks of the civil and military officials there were some fellows

of the Royal College of Medicine who when they heard these words praised Monkey publicly: "The monk is right. Even a god or an immortal would have to look, listen, ask questions and take the pulses before treating a patient successfully with his divine gifts."

All the officials agreed with these remarks, then went up to the king and submitted: "The reverend gentleman wishes to look, listen, ask questions and take the pulses before he can prescribe properly."

"Send him away," the king said over and over again as he lay on his dragon bed. "We cannot bear to see any strangers."

His attendants then came out from the inner quarters and announced, "Monk, His Majesty commands that you go away. He cannot bear to see a stranger."

"If he won't see a stranger," Monkey replied, "I know the art of taking the pulses with hanging threads."

"That is something of which we have only heard," exclaimed all the officials, concealing their delight, "but that we have never seen with our own eyes. Please go back in and submit another report."

The personal attendants then went back into the inner quarters and reported, "Your Majesty, the Venerable Sun can take your pulses with hanging threads: he does not need to see Your Majesty's face."

At this the king reflected, "In the three years we have been ill we have never tried this technique. Send him in."

At once the courtiers in attendance announced, "His Majesty has consented to pulse–taking by the hanging threads. Send the Venerable Sun to the inner quarters at once to make his diagnosis."

Monkey then entered the throne hall, where the Tang Priest met him with abuse: "Wretched ape! You will be the death of me!"

"My good master," Monkey replied with a smile, "I'm bringing you credit. How can you say I'll be the death of you?"

"In all the years you've been with me," Sanzang shouted, "I have never seen you cure a single person. You know nothing about the nature of drugs, and you have never studied medical books. How can you be so reckless and bring this disaster on us?"

"You don't realize, Master," said Monkey with a smile, "that I do know

the odd herbal remedy and can treat serious illnesses. I guarantee I can cure him. Even if the treatment kills him I'll only be guilty of manslaughter through medical incompetence. That's not a capital offence. What are you afraid of? There's nothing to worry Chapter 68

about, nothing. You sit here and see what my pulse diagnosis is like."

"How can you talk all this rubbish," Sanzang asked, "when you have never read the *Plain Questions,* the *Classic of Difficulties,* the *Pharmacopoeia* and the *Mysteries of the Pulses,* or studied the commentaries to them? How could you possibly diagnose his pulses by hanging threads?"

"I've got golden threads on me that you've never seen," Monkey replied, putting out his hand to pull three hairs from his tail, hold them in a bunch, call, "Change!" and turn them into three golden threads each twenty – four feet long to match the twenty – four periods of the solar year. Holding these in his hand he said to the Tang Priest, "These are golden threads, aren't they?"

"Stop talking, reverend gentleman," said the eunuchs in attendance on the king. "Please come inside and make your diagnosis." Taking his leave of the Tang Priest Monkey followed the attendants into the inner quarters to see his patient. Indeed:

The heart has a secret prescription that will save a country;

The hidden and wonderful spell gives eternal life.

If you do not know what illness was diagnosed or what medicines were used and wish to learn the truth listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 69

The Heart's Master Prepares Medicine in the Night

The Monarch Discusses a Demon at the Banquet

The story tells how the Great Sage Sun went with the eunuchs in attendance on the king to the inner quarters of the palace and stood outside the doors of the royal bed – chamber. Handing the three

golden threads to the eunuchs to take inside he gave them these instructions:

"Tell the queens and consorts of the inner palace or the eunuchs in personal attendance to fasten these threads to His Majesty's left wrist at the inch, the bar and the cubit, then pass them out of the window to me." The eunuchs did as he said, asking the king to sit on his dragon bed while they fastened one end of the golden threads to the inch, the bar and the cubit and passed the other ends outside.

Monkey took these ends and first held the end of one between the thumb and the forefinger of his right hand and felt the pulse at the inch point. He held the next against his middle finger and felt the pulse at the bar, and then pressed his thumb against his third finger and felt the cubit pulse. Next he regulated his own breathing to examine the four functions, the five depressions, the seven exterior and eight interior symptoms, the nine tempers, the deep pulses within the floating ones and the floating ones within the deep ones. He thus determined the insufficiencies and excesses of the functioning of organs, then told the eunuchs to take the threads off the king's left wrist and fasten them to the same points on the right wrist. He felt the threads one by one with the fingers of his left hand.

With a shake he put the golden threads back on his body and shouted at the top of his voice, "Your Majesty, the inch pulse on your left wrist is strong and tense, the bar pulse is sluggish and tardy, and the cubit is hollow and deep. On your right wrist the inch is floating and slippery, the bar is slow and knotted, and the cubit is frequent and firm. The left inch being strong and tense means that you have an internal emptiness and pains in the heart. The left bar being sluggish and tardy shows that you sweat and that your muscles feel numb. The hollowness and depth of the cubit suggest red urine and bloody stools. The floating, slippery inch pulse on the right wrist shows internal accumulations and blocked channels. The bar being slow and knotted is from indigestion and retained drinking. The frequency and wiriness of the cubit shows a chronic opposition of irritable fullness and empty coldness. My diagnosis of Your Majesty's ailment is that you are suffering from alarm and worry. The condition is the one known as the 'pair of birds parted.'"

When the king heard this inside his chamber he was so delighted that his spirits revived and he shouted in reply, "You have understood my illness through your fingers. That is indeed my trouble. Please go out and fetch some medicine."

Monkey walked slowly out of the inner palace, by when the eunuchs watching him had already given the news to everyone. When Monkey emerged a moment later the Tang Priest asked him how it had gone. "I made a diagnosis from his pulses," Monkey said. "I now have to prepare the medicine for his condition."

All the officials then came forward to ask, "Holy monk, reverend sir, what is the 'pair of birds parted'

condition of which you spoke just now?"

"It's when a cock bird and a hen who were flying together are suddenly separated by a violent storm," replied Monkey with a smile. "The hen misses the cock and the cock misses the hen. Isn't that 'a pair of birds parted?'"

At this the officials all cried out over and over again in admiration. "He really is a holy monk! He really is a divine doctor!"

"You have diagnosed the condition," said one of the fellows of the Royal College of Medicine, "but what drugs will you use to treat it?"

"There's no need to stick to prescriptions," said Monkey. "I'll choose the drugs when I see them."

"According to the medical classic, "There are 808 varieties of medicine and 404 varieties of sickness,'" said the fellows of the Royal College of Medicine. "How can it be right to use all the medicines when one person does not have all the ailments? You can't just choose your drugs on sight."

To this Monkey replied, "The ancients said, 'In preparing medicines do not stick rigidly to the formulae; use them as appropriate.' That's why I've asked for the full range of pharmaceutical materials so that I can make adjustments as I need to."

The fellows of the Royal College could say no more to this, but went out through the palace gates and sent those of the college's staff who were on duty to tell all the pharmacies in the city, whether selling raw materials or prepared drugs, to send three pounds of each to Monkey.

"This is no place for preparing medicine," said Monkey. "All the medicines and a set of pharmacist's utensils must be sent to the Hostel of Meeting and handed over to my two fellow disciples." The fellows did as they were told. Three pounds of each of the 808 ingredients of medicine together with pharmacist's rollers, hand – mills, sieves, mortars, bowls, pestles and the like were all sent to the hostel, handed over and received.

Monkey went back into the throne hall and asked his master to return to the hostel with him while he prepared the medicine. Sanzang was just getting up to go when the king sent a command from the inner quarters that Chapter 69

the Master of the Law was to stay behind and spend the night in the Hall of Literary Splendor; the next morning, after taking the medicine and recovering from his illness, the king would reward them, inspect the passport and send them on their way. Sanzang was horrified.

"Disciple," he said, "he means to keep me here as a hostage. If he is cured he will be happy to send us on our way, but if the treatment fails my life is over. You must be very careful and pay full attention when preparing the medicine."

"Don't worry, Master," Monkey said with a smile, "Enjoy yourself here. I'm a superb doctor."

Taking his leave of Sanzang and of all the officials the splendid Great Sage went straight back to the hostel where Pig welcomed him with a grin. "Brother," he said, "I know what you're up to."

"What?" Monkey asked.

"If fetching the scriptures doesn't come off you'll be left without any capital to start up a business." Pig replied. "Now you've seen how prosperous this place is you're planning to open a chemist's shop here."

"Don't talk nonsense," shouted Monkey. "When I've cured the king I'll use my success to leave the court and be on our way. I'm not going to be running a chemist's."

"Well," said Pig, "if you're not opening a shop, why get three pounds of

each of 808 different ingredients to treat one man? How much of it will you need? How many years will it take for him to finish the lot?"

"He'll never finish that much," Monkey replied. "The fellows of their Royal College of Medicine are a load of idiots. The only reason why I sent for so many ingredients was to baffle them and stop them knowing which ones I'm going to use. Then they won't be able to find out what my miraculous prescription is."

As they were talking two of the hostel staff came in and fell to their knees before them to say, "We beg the holy monks and reverend gentlemen to partake of their evening repast."

"This morning you treated us rather differently," said Monkey, "so why go on your knees to invite us now?"

"When you first came, my lords," the hostel orderlies replied, "we were too blind to recognize your illustrious faces. Now we have heard how you are using your outstanding medical powers to treat our king. If His Majesty recovers his health he will share the kingdom with you, so we'll all be your subjects. So it's only proper for us to kowtow to you and to invite you politely to eat." On hearing this Monkey cheerfully took the place of honour while Pig and Friar Sand sat to his left and right.

As the vegetarian meal was served Friar Sand asked, "Where's our master, brother?"

"The king's kept him as a hostage," Monkey replied. "When the king's cured he'll regard us and send us on our way."

"Is he being well looked after?" Friar Sand continued.

"His host's a king," Monkey replied, "so of course he's in luxury. When I went there he had three senior ministers looking after him and he was invited into the Hall of Literary Splendor."

"In that case," said Pig, "the master's still doing much better than us. He's got ministers looking after him, and we've only got a couple of hostel orderlies to serve us. So I'm going to forget about him and eat a good meal."

Chapter 69

Thus the three of them enjoyed their meal at ease.

It was now late. "Tidy the dishes away," Monkey said to the hostel orderlies, "and fetch me plenty of oil and candles. The best time for us to make up the medicine will be in the quiet of the night."

The orderlies brought oil and candles as instructed and were then dismissed. In the still silence of the middle of the night Pig asked, "Brother, what, medicines are we going to make? Let's get on with it. I need my shut–eye."

"Get an ounce of rhubarb and grind it to a fine powder with a roller," said Brother Monkey.

"Rhubarb has a bitter taste and a cold nature and isn't noxious," said Friar Sand. "Its nature is deep, not superficial; it's an active medicine, not a defensive one. It removes stagnations and clears obstructions, settles disorder, and brings about peace, and they call it 'the general'. It's a cathartic drug. But perhaps it's wrong for someone in an empty, weakened state after a long illness."

"There's something you don't know, brother," Monkey said. "This drug helps phlegm, makes the vital forces travel smoothly, and calms the heat and cold that become congested in the stomach. Just leave me alone and fetch me an ounce of croton seeds. Shell them, peel them, hammer the poisonous oil out of them, then grind them to a fine powder with a roller."

"Croton seed is acrid, hot by nature and poisonous," said Pig. "It cuts away hard accumulations, deals with submerged cold in the lungs and bowels, and clears obstructions. It smooths the way for water and grain. It's a warrior for storming passes and gates. You must be very careful how you use it."

"Brother," Monkey replied, "what you don't understand is that this is a drug that destroys knots, opens the intestine and can cure swelling of the heart and dropsy. Hurry up and get it ready. And I'll want an adjuvant to back it up."

The two of them started work on grinding the two drugs to a fine powder. "You'll need dozens more, brother,"

they said, "so which'll they be?"

"That's all," Monkey replied.

"But you've got three pounds of each of 808 different medicinal ingredients," Pig said. "If all you're going to use is two ounces you've been making a fool of these people."

Monkey then produced a patterned porcelain dish and said, "Stop talking, brothers. Take this dish and fill it half full with soot scraped from a cooking pot."

"Whatever for?" Pig asked.

"I need it for the medicine," Monkey replied. "I never heard of soot from a cooking pot being used in medicine," said Friar Sand.

"It's called 'frost on the flowers,'" said Monkey, "and it helps treat all kinds of illness. Didn't you know that?"

The idiot then scraped off half a dishful and ground it up to a fine powder.

Monkey then handed him another dish and said, "Now fetch me half a dishful of our horse's piss."

"What for?" Pig asked.

Chapter 69

957

Journey to the West

"To make the medicine up into pills with." Monkey replied.

"Brother," said Friar Sand with a smile, "this is no joking matter. Horse piss stinks. You can't use it in medicine. I've only seen vinegar paste, old rice paste, refined honey and clean water used for making pills.

Who ever heard of horse piss used to make pills? It's got a terrible stink. Anyone with a weak spleen would throw up at the first sniff. If he goes on and takes the rhubarb and croton seeds he'll be vomiting at one end and having the runs at the other. That'll be no joke."

"You don't know the inside story," said Monkey. "That horse of ours is no ordinary horse. He used to be a dragon in the Western Ocean. If he'll give us some of his piss it'll cure any illness you could have. My only worry is that he might refuse." When Pig heard this he went and

stood beside the horse, who was lying down asleep. The idiot kicked the horse till he got to his feet then pressed himself against the horse's stomach for a very long time but without seeing any sign of piss. He ran back to Monkey to say, "Brother, never mind about treating the king. Hurry up and cure the horse. He's done for: he's dried right up. There's no way we're going to get a drop of piss out of him."

"I'll go with you," smiled Monkey.

"I'll come and have a look too," said Friar Sand.

When the three of them reached the horse he started to jump about and shout in human language at the top of his voice, "How can you be so ignorant, brother? I used to be a flying dragon in the Western Ocean. The Bodhisattva Guanyin saved me after I'd offended against the Heavenly Code. She sawed off my horns, removed my scales and turned me into a horse to carry the master to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures. This way I'll be able to redeem my crimes. If I pissed into any river I was crossing the fish in the water would drink it and turn into dragons. The grass on any mountain we were going over that got a taste of it would become magic fungus for immortal boys to gather and give themselves eternal life. So of course I can't casually drop it in a vulgar, worldly place like this."

"Watch your words, brother," said Monkey. "This is the city of a Western king, not some vulgar, worldly place. You wouldn't be casually dropping it here. As the saying goes, many hands make light work. We've got to cure the king. When we do we'll all be covered in glory. If we fail I'm afraid we won't be able to leave this country with any credit."

"Wait a moment," the horse finally said. Look at him as he springs forward then squats back on his haunches, grinds his teeth noisily and only with the greatest strain manages to squeeze out a few drops before standing up again.

"What a deadbeat," said Pig. "You could give us a few more even if they were drops of gold."

Seeing that the dish was now about a third full Monkey said, "That'll do, that'll do. Take it away." Only then did Friar Sand feel cheerful.

The three of them then returned to the main hall, mixed the piss with the ingredients that had already been prepared, and rolled the mixture into three large round balls. "They're too big, brothers," said Monkey.

"They're only walnut—sized," Pig replied. "That wouldn't be enough for a single mouthful if I were taking them." The three disciples then put the pills into a large box and went to bed fully dressed.

It was soon dawn, and despite his sickness the king held court, asking the Tang Priest to come to see him and sending all his officials straight to the Hostel of Meeting to pay their respects to the holy monk, the Venerable Chapter 69

Sun, and fetch the medicine.

When the officials reached the hostel they prostrated themselves before Brother Monkey with the words, "His Majesty has sent us to pay our respects and fetch the miraculous medicine." Monkey told Pig to fetch the box, which he opened and handed to the officials.

"What is this medicine called?" they asked. "We would like to be able to inform His Majesty when we see him."

"It's called Black Gold Elixir," Monkey replied, at which Pig and Friar Sand had to hide their grins as they thought, "of course they're black gold— —they were made with soot scraped off cooking pots."

"What should be taken with the pills to guide them on their way?" the officials asked.

"There are two kinds of guide that can be taken with them," Monkey replied. "One's easily got hold of. That is a decoction of six ingredients to be taken as a hot potion."

"What six ingredients?" the officials asked.

"A fart from a flying crow," Monkey replied, "piss from a carp in a fast —flowing stream, some of the face—powder used by the Queen Mother of the West, soot from elixir refined in Lord Lao's furnace, three pieces of a worn—out head cloth of the Jade Emperor's, and five whiskers from a trapped dragon's beard. A decoction of those six ingredients taken with the pills would clear up your king's illness straight away."

When the officials heard this they replied, "Those are things that are not to be found in this world, so please tell us what the other guide

is."

"The pills should be taken with rootless water," said Monkey.

"That's very easily got hold of," smiled the officials.

"How can you be so sure?" Monkey asked.

"We have a saying here," the officials replied, "that if you need rootless water you take a bowl or a dish to a well or a stream, fill it with water, and hurry back with it. Don't spill a drop, don't look behind you, and give it to the patient to take with the medicine."

"But well water and stream water both have roots," Monkey said. "The rootless water I'm talking about has to fall from the sky and be drunk before it touches the ground. Only then can it be called rootless."

"That's easily got too," the officials said. "The medicine shouldn't be taken till the next cloudy, wet day."

The officials then kowtowed to thank Monkey and took the medicine back with them to present to the king, who delightedly ordered his attendants to bring it to him.

"What are these pills?" he asked when he saw them.

"The holy monk says they are Black Gold Elixir and have to be taken with rootless water," the officials replied. The king then sent some of his palace women to fetch rootless water.

Chapter 69

"The holy monk says that rootless water can't be got from wells or streams," the officials said. "It has to be water that has come down from the sky and not yet touched the ground." The king then ordered his aides to issue a decree inviting magicians to summon rain. The officials then issued a proclamation as the king had ordered.

Back in the hall of the Hostel of Meeting Brother Monkey said to Pig, "He must be given some rain now so he can take his medicine. This is very urgent. How are we going to get some? I reckon he's a very virtuous and worthy king, so why don't we help him get a little rainwater to take his medicine with?"

"But how are we going to help him get some rootless water?" Pig asked.

"Stand on my left and be my Sustainer Star," Monkey said to him, then told Friar Sand, "stand on my right as my Straightener Star while I help him to get some rootless water."

The splendid Great Sage then paced out a magic pattern and said the words of a spell. Soon a dark cloud appeared to their East that came closer till it was over their heads. "Great Sage," called a voice from it, "Ao Guang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea, is here to call on you."

"I wouldn't have troubled you if it hadn't been important," Monkey said. "Could I ask you to help by giving the king here some rootless water to take his medicine with?"

"When you summoned me, Great Sage," the dragon king replied, "you said nothing about water. I have only come by myself. I haven't brought any rain-making equipment, to say nothing of wind, clouds, thunder and lightning. So how can I make it rain?"

"There'll be no call for wind, clouds, thunder or lightning this time," Monkey said, "and we don't need much rain either. We just need enough water for someone to take his medicine with."

"In that case I'll do a couple of sneezes and spit out some saliva," the dragon king said. "That ought to be enough for him to take his medicine."

"Terrific," said Monkey, delighted. "Don't waste a moment. Do it as soon as you can."

The ancient old dragon gradually brought his dark cloud down till it was just over the palace, though he kept himself entirely concealed. He spat out a mouthful of saliva that turned into timely rain, whereupon all the officials at court exclaimed, "Ten million congratulations, Your Majesty. Heaven is sending down timely rain."

The king then ordered, "Take vessels out to hold the rain. All officials, whether inside or outside the palace and irrespective of their rank, must gather this sacred water to save our life." Just watch as all the civil and military officials as well as the consorts, concubines, three thousand beauties, and eight hundred charming ladies—in—waiting of the three harems and the six compounds of the inner palace all stood there holding cups, dishes, bowls and plates to catch the timely rain. Up in the sky the ancient dragon so controlled his saliva that all of it fell within the palace. After about two hours the dragon king took his leave of the Great Sage and went back to the sea. When the officials gathered all the cups, dishes, bowls and plates together they found that some had caught one or two drops of water, some three to five, and some none at all. When it was all put together there were a little over three dishes full of it, and this was all presented to the king. Indeed: The throne hall was filled with exquisite fragrance;

Chapter 69

960

Journey to the West

Fine scents were wafting round the Son of Heaven's court.

The king then dismissed the Master of the Law and had the Black Gold Elixir and the timely rain carried into the inner quarters, where he took the first pill with the first dish of timely rain, then the second pill with the second dish. In three efforts he finished all three pills and all three dishfuls. Soon afterwards there was a noise from his stomach like the endless turning of a windlass. He sent for his chamber pot and evacuated four or five times before taking some rice porridge and collapsing on his dragon bed. When two of his consorts inspected the chamber pot they saw it contained huge amounts of feces and mucus, and amid it all a ball of glutinous rice.

"The root of the disorder has come out," the consorts reported, going over to the royal bed. The king was very pleased to hear this and ate some rice. A little later his chest felt eased and his natural forces and blood were in harmonious balance once more. He was full of vigor and the strength came back to his legs, so he rose from his bed, dressed in his court clothes and went into the throne hall, where he greeted the Tang Priest by prostrating himself. The venerable elder returned this courtesy as quickly as he could.

When this had been done the king helped Sanzang to his feet with his

own hands and told his courtiers, "Write a note at once sending our personal and respectful greetings and have an official go to invite the three illustrious disciples of the Master of the Law to come here. Meanwhile the Eastern hall of the palace is to be opened up and the department of foreign relations is to arrange a banquet of thanksgiving." Having been given these commands the officials carried them out. The scribes wrote out the note and the caterers prepared the meal. A state is indeed strong enough to overturn a mountain, and everything was done in an instant.

When Pig saw the officials come to deliver the note he was beside himself with delight. "Brother," he said, "it really must be miracle medicine. From the way they're coming to thank you you must have pulled it off."

"You've got it all wrong, brother," said Friar Sand. "As the saying goes, 'One man's good fortune affects his whole household.' We two made up the pills, so we take a share of the credit. So just enjoy yourself and stop talking." Hey! Just look at the three brothers as they all happily go straight to the palace, where all the officials received them and led them to the Eastern hall.

Here they saw the Tang Priest with the king and his ministers and the banquet all set out ready. Brother Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand all chanted a "na – a – aw" of respect to their master, after which the officials all came in. In the best place there were set out four tables of vegetarian food. It was the sort of banquet at which there are ten times as many dishes as you can eat. In front of these tables was one of meat dishes, and on this too you could see ten dishes of rare delicacies while you ate one. To either side four or five hundred more single tables were most neatly set out.

As the ancients had it:

"A hundred rare delicacies,

A thousand goblets of fine wine,

Rich cream and yogurt,

Fat, red meat like brocade."

Precious and many – coloured decorations,

Heavy fragrances of fruit.

Huge sugar dragons coil round sweet lions and immortals:

Ingots of cake draw furnaces escorted by phoenixes.

For meat there was pork and mutton, goose, chicken, duck and fish;
For vegetables, bamboo shoots, beansprouts, fungus and button mushrooms.

Delicious noodles in soup,

Translucent creamy sweets,

Succulent millet,

Fresh wild rice congee,

Pungent, tasty soup with rice noodles,

Dishes in which sweetness vied with beauty.

Monarch and subjects raised their cups as the diners took their seats;
Officials seated by rank slowly passed the jugs.

Holding a cup in his hand the king first seated the Tang Priest, who said, "As a monk I may not drink liquor."

"This is alcohol – free wine," the king said. "Could you not drink one cup of this, Master of the Law?"

"But wine is the first prohibition for us monks," said Sanzang. The king felt awkward.

"If you may not drink, Master of the Law, how can I congratulate you?"

"My three badly – behaved disciples will drink on my behalf," Sanzang replied. The king then happily passed the golden goblet to Monkey, who took it, made a courteous gesture to the assembly, and downed a cupful.

Seeing how cheerfully he downed it the king offered him another cup.

Monkey did not decline it but drank again.

"Have a third goblet," said the king with a smile, and Monkey accepted and drank for a third time. The king then ordered that the cup be refilled and said, "Have another to make it four for the four seasons."

Pig, who was standing beside Monkey, had to put up with the saliva gurgling inside him as the wine would not come his way; and now that the king was pressing Monkey so hard to drink he started to shout, "Your Majesty, that medicine you took owes something to me. Those pills include horse— —" When Monkey heard Chapter 69

this he was terrified that the idiot was going to give the game away, so he handed Pig the cup. Pig took the cup, drank and stopped talking.

"Holy monk," said the king, "just now you said there was horse in the pills. What sort of horse?"

"This brother of mine has a very loose tongue," said Monkey, cutting in. "We've got a really good formula that has been tried and tested, and he wants to give it away. The pills Your Majesty took this morning included not horse but Aristolochia."

"What class of medicine is Aristolochia?" the king asked. "What conditions can it cure?"

One of the fellows of the Royal College of Medicine who was standing beside the king said, "Your Majesty, Aristolochia is bitter, cold and free of poison,

Ends shortness of breath and cures phlegm well,

Circulates the energy, removes blood infections,

Fills emptiness, soothes coughs and eases the heart.

"It was the right thing to use, the right thing to use," the king said. "The Venerable Pig must have another cup." The idiot said nothing more, but downed three goblets. The king then gave three cupfuls to Friar Sand, who drank them. Everyone then sat down.

When they all had been feasting and drinking for a long time the king

raised a large goblet once more and handed it to Monkey. "Please sit down, Your Majesty," Monkey said. "I've been drinking hard in every round.

I'd never refuse."

"Holy monk," the king said, "we are under a profound debt of gratitude to you that we will never be able to repay. Please drain this great goblet: we have something to say to you."

"Say what you will first," Monkey replied, "I'll drink after."

"We suffered from that melancholia for years on end," the king said, "and one dose of your miraculous pills cured it."

"When I saw Your Majesty yesterday I realized you were suffering from melancholia," Monkey said, "but I don't know what's getting you down."

"There's an old saying that a family doesn't talk about its dirt to strangers," the king replied. "As you are our benefactor, holy monk, we shall tell you, but please don't laugh."

"I'd never dare," Monkey said. "Please speak freely."

"How many countries did you holy monks come through on your way here from the East?" the king asked.

Chapter 69

963

Journey to the West

"Five or six," Monkey replied.

"What titles do the queens of the other kings have?" the king went on to ask.

"They're called the queens of the Main Palace, East Palace and West Palace," Monkey replied.

"We don't use titles like that," the king said. "We call the principal queen the Queen of the Sacred Golden Palace, the Eastern queen the Queen of the Sacred Jade Palace and the Western queen the Queen of the Sacred Silver Palace. But now only the Jade and Silver Queen are here."

"Why isn't the Golden Queen in the palace?" Monkey asked.

"She has been gone for three whole years," the king replied in tears.

"Where did she go?" Monkey asked.

"At the Dragon—boat Festival three years ago," the king said, "we were in the Pomegranate Pavilion of the palace gardens with our queens and consorts, unwrapping rice dumplings, putting artemisia out, drinking calamus and realgar wine and watching the dragon boats race when all of a sudden there was a gust of wind.

An evil spirit appeared in mid—air. He said he was the Evil Star Matcher who lives in the Horndog Cave on Mount Unicorn and was short of a wife. Seeing how beautiful and charming our Golden Queen is he wanted her for his wife and insisted we should hand her over at once. If we did not do so by the time he had asked three times he was going to eat us up first, then our officials and all the commoners living in the city. We were so concerned over the fate of our country and our people that there was no alternative: the Golden Queen had to be pushed outside the pavilion to be carried noisily off by the evil spirit. All this gave us such a fright that the rice dumpling we were eating turned solid inside us. On top of that we have been unable to sleep for worrying, which is why we were ill for three years. Since taking you holy monks' miraculous pills we have evacuated our bowels three times, and the accumulations from three years ago have all been passed. That is why our body now feels light and strong and our spirit is restored to what it was. Our life has today been given to us by you holy monks; this is a gift more weighty than Mount Tai."

When Brother Monkey heard this he was very happy indeed and he downed the huge goblet of wine in two gulps. "Your Majesty," he said with a smile to the king, "so that's what caused your shock and your depression. Today you've been lucky: you met me and you were cured. But I don't know whether you want the Golden Queen back in the palace."

To this the king answered with tears, "We have been longing for her night and day, but nobody has ever been able to catch the evil spirit. Of course we want her back in our country."

"What if I go to deal with that evil creature for you?" said Monkey.

The king fell to his knees and replied, "If you can rescue our queen we will gladly take our three queens and nine consorts away from the capital and go to live as commoners, leaving the whole kingdom to be

yours to reign over, holy monk."

When Pig, who was sitting beside them, heard all this being said and such great honors being done he could not help bursting into noisy laughter.

"This king's got no sense of what's proper," he chortled. "Fancy giving up his kingdom and going on his knees to a monk for the sake of his old woman."

Chapter 69

Monkey hurried forward to help the king back on his feet and ask, "Your Majesty, has the evil spirit been back since he got the Golden Queen?"

"In the fifth month of the year before last," the king said, "he carried off the Golden Queen. In the tenth month he came back to demand a couple of ladies in waiting to serve her, and we presented him with a couple. In the third month of last year he came to demand another couple, and two more in the seventh month. Then in the second month of this year it was a fourth pair. We do not know when he will be back again."

"If he comes that often you must be terrified of him," Monkey replied.

"Because he has come so frequently we are afraid of him and of his murderous intentions," said the king. "In the fourth month last year we ordered the building of a demon shelter, so that whenever we hear the wind and know that he's coming we can shelter there with our two queens and nine consorts."

"Would Your Majesty mind taking me to see the shelter?" Monkey asked, and the king led Monkey by his left hand from the table. All the officials rose to their feet.

"Brother," protested Pig, "you're very unreasonable. Why leave this royal wine and break up the banquet to go looking at something?"

Hearing this and realizing that Pig was worried for his stomach the king told his attendants to have two tables of vegetarian food brought along so that Pig could go on being wined outside the demon shelter.

Only then did the idiot stop making a fuss and join in with his master and Friar Sand saying, "Let's break up the banquet."

As a column of civil and military officials led the way the king and Monkey went arm – in – arm through the living quarters of the palace to the back of the royal gardens, but there were no great buildings to be seen.

"Where's the demon shelter?" Monkey asked, and before the words were out of his mouth two eunuchs levered open a square flagstone with red lacquered crowbars.

"Here it is," said the king. "Twenty feet or more below us a large underground palace hall has been excavated.

In it there are four great vats of purified oil in which lights burn night and day. When we hear the wind we take shelter here and the flagstone is put on again from outside."

"So the evil spirit doesn't want to kill you," said Monkey with a smile. "If he did this would give you no protection." Just as he was speaking there came the roaring of a wind from due South that made the dust fly.

In their alarm all the officials complained, "That monk has the mouth of an oracle. The moment he mentions the evil spirit it turns up." The panic – stricken monarch abandoned Monkey and scuttled into his underground shelter. The Tang Priest went with him, and all the officials fled for cover.

Pig and Friar Sand wanted to hide too, but Monkey grabbed one of them with each hand and said, "Don't be afraid, brothers. You and I are going to identify him and see what sort of evil spirit he is."

"Nonsense," said Pig. "What do we want to identify him for? The officials have all hidden and the king's shut himself away. Why don't we clear off? What kind of hero are you trying to be?" But struggle though he might the idiot could not break free. When Monkey had been holding on to him for some time an evil spirit suddenly appeared in mid – air. Just see what it looked like:

Chapter 69

A loathsome great body nine feet tall,

Round eyes flashing like lamps of gold.

Two huge ears sticking out as if they were round fans,

Four steel fangs like very long nails.

Red hair curled at his temples; his brows were as flames;

His nose was a hanging trough; his nostrils flared.

His whiskers were strands of cinnabar thread,

And jutting cheekbones shaped his green face.

On red—muscled arms were hands of indigo blue,

And ten sharp claws grasped a spear.

A leopardskin kilt was tied round his waist.

Bare feet and tangled hair completed his fiendish looks.

"Friar Sand," asked Monkey when he saw the evil spirit, "can you recognize him?"

"I don't know who he is," Friar Sand replied. "I've never seen him before."

"Pig," Monkey next asked, "do you know?"

"I've never had a cup or a drink with him," Pig replied. "He's no friend or neighbour of mine. How could I know?"

"He reminds me of the sallow—faced golden—eyed gate keeper ghost under the Equal of Heaven of the Eastern Peak."

"No he isn't, no he isn't," said Pig.

"How do you know he isn't?" Monkey asked.

"Because ghosts are spirits of the dark and the underworld," Pig replied. "They only come out at night, between five and midnight. It's only ten in the morning, and no ghost would ever dare come out now. And even if it was a devil it'd never ride a cloud. Ghosts that stir up winds make whirlwinds, not gales. Perhaps he's the Evil Star Matcher."

"You're not such an idiot after all," said Monkey. "That sounds sensible, so you two look after the master while I go to ask him his name. That'll help me rescue the Golden Queen and bring her back to the palace for the king."

Chapter 69

"Go if you must," Pig replied, "but don't tell him anything about us." Monkey did not deign to answer, but leapt straight up on his magic light. Goodness!

To settle the nation he started by curing the king;

To preserve the Way love and hatred had to go.

If you don't know who won the battle that followed when Monkey rose up into the sky or how the evil monster was captured and the Golden Queen rescued listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

Chapter 70

The Evil Monster's Treasures Emit Smoke,

Sand and Fire Wukong Steals the Golden Bells by Trickery

The story tells how Brother Monkey summoned up his divine prestige and rose up into the air on his magic light, wielding his iron cudgel. "Where are you from, evil monster?" he asked, shouting in the evil spirit's face. "And where are you going to wreak havoc?"

"I'm the vanguard warrior under the Great King Evil Star Matcher from Horndog Cave on Mount Unicorn,"

shouted the demon at the top of his voice, "that's who I am. His Majesty has ordered me to fetch two ladies – in – waiting to serve Her Majesty the Golden Queen. Who are you and how dare you question me?"

"I'm Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven," Monkey replied. "I was passing through this country while escorting the Tang Priest to worship the Buddha in the Western Heaven. Now I know that your gang of monsters was oppressing the king I'm going to use my heroic powers to bring the country back to order and wipe out this evil. And

now you've come along to throw your life away just when I didn't know where to find you." When the monster heard this he foolishly thrust his spear at Monkey, who struck back at his face with the iron cudgel. They fought a splendid battle up in mid–air:

The cudgel was the sea–settler from the dragon's palace;

The spear was of iron tempered by mankind.

An ordinary weapon was no match for that of an immortal;

In a few clashes its magic powers all drained away.

The Great Sage was an immortal of the Supreme Ultimate;

The spirit was only an evil monster.

How could a demon approach a True One?

Chapter 70

967

Journey to the West

In the face of truth the evil would be destroyed.

One stirred up wind and dust to terrify a king;

The other trod on mist and cloud to blot out sun and moon.

When they dropped their guard to try for victory

Neither of them dared to show off.

The Heaven–equaling Great Sage was the abler fighter:

With a loud clash of his cudgel the spear was broken.

When his spear was quickly broken in two by Monkey's iron cudgel the evil spirit was in fear for his life, so he turned the wind right round and fled Westwards.

Instead of chasing him Monkey brought his cloud down to the entrance of the underground demon shelter.

"Master," he called, "you and His Majesty can come out now. The monster's run away." Only then did the Tang Priest come out of the

underground shelter, supporting the king. The sky was clear, and all traces of the evil spirit had disappeared.

The king went over to the table, filled a golden goblet from the wine bottle with his own hands, and presented it to Monkey with the words, "Holy monk, allow us to offer our provisional thanks."

Monkey took the cup, but before he could reply an official came in from outside the Western gate of the palace to report, "The Western gate is on fire."

As soon as he heard this Monkey threw the wine, cup and all, up into the air. The cup fell with a clang. This so alarmed the king that he bowed to Monkey with the words, "Forgive us, holy monk, forgive us. We have treated you shabbily. The proper thing would have been to ask you into the throne hall to bow to you in thanks. We only offered you the wine here because it was to hand. Did you not throw the goblet aside because you were offended, holy monk?"

"Nothing of the sort," laughed Monkey, "nothing of the sort."

A moment later another official came in to report, "There's been a miraculous fall of rain. No sooner had the Western gate caught fire than a heavy rainstorm put it out. The streets are running with water and it all smells of wine."

"Your Majesty," said Monkey with another smile, "you thought I'd taken offence when I tossed the cup aside, but you were wrong. When the evil spirit fled Westwards I didn't go after him, so he started that fire. I just used the goblet to put out the demon's fire and save the people outside the Western gate. It didn't mean anything else."

The king, even more delighted than before, treated Monkey with still greater respect. He invited Sanzang and his three disciples to enter the throne hall with him, clearly intending to abdicate in their favour.

Chapter 70

"Your Majesty," said Brother Monkey with a smile, "the demon who was here just now said he was a vanguard warrior under the Evil Star Matcher who'd come here to fetch palace girls. Now he's gone back beaten he's bound to report that damned monster, who's certain to

come here to fight me. I'm worried that if he comes here at the head of his hordes he'll alarm the common people and terrify Your Majesty. I'd like to go out to meet him, capture him in mid – air and bring back your queen. But I don't know the way. How far is it to his cave from here?"

"We once sent some of the horsemen and infantry of our night scouts to find out what was happening," the king replied. "The return journey took them over fifty days. It's over a thousand miles away to the South."

"Pig, Friar Sand," said Monkey on learning this, "stay on guard here. I'm off."

"Wait another day, holy monk," said the king, grabbing hold of him. "Don't go till we have had some dried provisions prepared for you. We'll give you silver for the journey and a fast horse too."

"You're talking as if I'd have to go slogging up mountains and over ridges, Your Majesty," Monkey replied. "I tell you truthfully that I can do the return journey of a thousand miles each way before a cup of wine you've poured out has had time to get cold."

"Holy monk," the king replied, "I hope you won't take offence at our saying this, but your distinguished features are very much like those of an ape. How can you have such magical powers of travel?" To this Monkey replied:

"Although my body is the body of an ape,

When young I mastered the paths of life and death.

1 visited all the great teachers who taught me their Way

And trained myself by night and day beside the mountain.

I took heaven as my roof and the earth as my furnace

And used both kinds of drug to complete the sun and moon,

Taking from positive and negative, joining fire and water,

Until suddenly I – was aware of the Mystic Pass.

1 relied entirely on the Dipper for success in my movements,

Shifting my steps by relying on the handle of that constellation.

When the time is right I lower or increase the heat,

Taking out lead and adding mercury, watching them both.

By grouping the Five Elements transformations are made;

Chapter 70

969

Journey to the West

Through combining the Four Forms the seasons can be distinguished.

The two vital forces returned to the zodiac;

The three teachings met on the golden elixir road.

When understanding of the laws came to the four limbs

The original somersault was given divine assistance.

With a single bound I could cross the Taihang mountains;

At one go I could fly across the Cloud–touching Ford.

A thousand steep ridges are no bother to me,

Nor hundreds of rivers as great as the Yangtse.

Because my transformations are impossible to stop

I can cover sixty thousand miles in a single leap.

The king was both alarmed and delighted to hear this. He presented a cup of royal wine to Monkey with a chuckle and the words, "Holy monk, you have a long and tiring journey ahead of you. Won't you drink this wine to help you on your way?"

All the Great Sage had on his mind was going off to defeat the demon, he was not at all interested in drinking.

"Put it down," he said. "I'll drink it when I come back." No sooner had the splendid Monkey said this than he disappeared with a whoosh. We will not describe the amazement of the king and his subjects.

Instead we tell how with a single leap Monkey was soon in sight of a tall mountain locked in mists. He brought his cloud down till he was

standing on the summit. When he looked around he saw that it was a fine mountain:

Soaring to the heavens, occupying the earth,

Blocking out the sun and making clouds.

Where it soared to the heavens

The towering peak rose high;

In the earth it occupied

Its ranges spread afar.

Chapter 70

970

Journey to the West

What blocked the sun

Was the ridge dark with pines;

Where clouds were made

Was among the boulders glistening underneath the scar.

The dark pines

Were green throughout all seasons;

The glistening boulders

Would never change in many a thousand years.

Apes could often be heard howling in the night,

And evil pythons would often cross the deep ravines.

On the mountains birds sang sweetly

While the wild beasts roared.

Mountain roebuck and deer

Moved around in many a pair.

Mountain magpies and crows

Flew in dense flocks.

There was no end of mountain flowers in sight,

While mountain peaches and other fruit gleamed in season.

Steep it was, and the going impossible,

But this was still a place where evil immortals could live in retirement.

The Great Sage gazed with unbounded delight and was just about to look for the entrance to the cave when flames leapt out from a mountain hollow. In an instant the red fire blazed to the heavens, and from the flames there poured out evil smoke that was even more terrible than the fire. What splendid smoke! This is what could be seen:

The fire glared with a myriad golden lamps;

The flames leapt in a thousand crimson rainbows.

The smoke was not a stove chimney's smoke,

Nor the smoke of grass or wood,

But smoke of many colours,

Blue, red, white, black and yellow.

It blackened the columns outside the Southern Gate of Heaven,

Scorched the roofbeams in the Hall of Miraculous Mist.

It burned so hard that

Wild beasts in their dens were cooked through, skins and all,

And the forest birds lost all their plumage.

At the mere sight of this appalling smoke he wondered

How the demon king could be captured in the mountain.

Just as the Great Sage was transfixed with terror a sandstorm burst out of the mountain. What magnificent sand! It blotted out the sun and the sky. Look:

Swirling masses of it filled the sky,

Dark and turbid as it covered the earth.

The fine grains blinded the people everywhere,

While bigger cinders filled the valleys like rolling sesame seeds.

Immortal boys collecting herbs lost their companions;

Woodmen gathering firewood could not find their way home.

Even if you were holding a bright – shining pearl

It still would have blown too hard for you to see.

Monkey had been so absorbed in enjoying the view that he did not notice the sand and cinders flying into his nose till it started tickling. Giving two great sneezes he stretched his hand out behind him, felt for two pebbles Chapter 70

at the foot of a cliff and blocked his nostrils with them, then shook himself and turned into a fire – grabbing sparrowhawk that flew straight in among the flames and smoke, made a few swoops, and at once stopped the sand and cinders and put out the fires. He quickly turned back into himself, landed, and looked around again.

This time he heard a banging and a clanging like a copper gong.

"I've come the wrong way," he said to himself. "This is no den of demons. The gong sounds like an official messenger's gong. This must be the main road to some country, and that I must be an official messenger on his way to deliver some document. I'll go and question him."

As Monkey went along what looked like a young demon appeared. He was holding a yellow flag, carrying a document on his back and beating a gong as he hurried along so fast he was almost flying. "So this is the so—and—so who was beating that gong," Monkey said. "I wonder what document he's delivering. I'll ask him."

The splendid Great Sage shook himself and turned into a grasshopper that lightly flew over and alighted on his document bag. Here Monkey could hear the evil spirit talking garrulously to himself as he beat the gong.

"Our king is thoroughly vicious. Three years ago he took the Golden Queen from the Kingdom of Purpuria, but fate's been against him and he hasn't been able to get his hands on her. The poor palace ladies he took had to suffer on her behalf. He killed two of them who came, then the next four. He demanded them the year before last, last year and earlier this year. When he sent for two more this time he found his match. The vanguard warrior who went to demand the palace ladies was beaten by someone called Sun the Novice or whatever. He didn't get his palace girls. It made our king so angry he wants to wage a war on Purpuria. He's sent me with this declaration of war. Their king will be all right if he doesn't fight, but if he does fight it'll be a disaster for him. When our king uses his fire, smoke and sandstorms their king, ministers and common people will all die. Then we'll take over their city. Our king will be its monarch and we'll be his subjects. But even though we'll get official posts it goes against Heaven."

Monkey was very pleased to hear this. "So there are even some decent evil spirits," he thought. "That last remark— —'it goes against Heaven'— —was very good. I wonder what he meant when he said that fate has been against their king and he hasn't been able to get his hands on the Golden Queen. Let me ask him some questions." With a whining buzz he flew away from the evil spirit to a point some miles ahead of him on the road, shook himself and turned into a Taoist boy:

He wore his hair in two bunches

And a robe of a hundred patches.

He beat on a fisherman's drum

As he sang some Taoist snatches.

As Monkey came round the slope towards the little devil he raised his hands in greeting and said, "Where are you going, sir? What official document is that you're delivering?"

The devil seemed to recognize him as he stopped beating his gong, returned his greeting and said with a titter,

"Our king's sent me to Purpuria with a declaration of war."

"Has that woman from Purpuria slept with the king yet?" Monkey asked, pressing on with his questioning.

Chapter 70

973

Journey to the West

"When he brought her here the other year," the little devil replied, "an immortal gave the Golden Queen a magic robe as her wedding dress. As soon as she put it on she was covered from head to foot with spike. Our king didn't dare so much as caress her. Even the slightest touch makes his hand hurt. I don't know why it happened. So from that year till this he hasn't had her. When his vanguard fighter was sent this morning to demand two more palace ladies to serve her he was beaten. Our king was so angry he sent me with this declaration of war. He's going to fight him tomorrow."

"So is the king in a bad mood?" Monkey asked.

"Yes, he's in a bad mood back there," said the little devil. "You ought to go and sing him some Taoist songs to cheer him—up." The splendid Monkey put his arms in his sleeves, ready to go, while the evil spirit went on his way beating his gong as before. Monkey then turned murderous. He brought out his cudgel, turned round and hit the little devil on the back of his head. The unfortunate demon's head was smashed to a pulp. The blood gushed out as his skin split open and his neck was broken. He was dead. Monkey then put his cudgel away and said to himself with regret.

"I was in too much of a hurry. I never asked him his name. Too bad." He took the declaration of war from the body and put it in his sleeve. Then he hid the yellow flag and the gong in the undergrowth by the path and was dragging the body by its ankles to throw it down the ravine when he heard something clinking. An ivory tablet inlaid with gold could be seen at the demon's waist. The writing on it read: This is our trusted subordinate Gocome. He is of short stature and has a spotty and unbearded face. This tablet is to be kept permanently at his waist. Anyone without this tablet is an impostor.

"So the wretch was called Gocome. But after being hit by this cudgel of mine he's gone and won't be coming back." He then undid the ivory tablet, fastened it at his own waist, and was just about to throw the body down when he remembered the terrible fire and smoke and decided he could not bring himself to look for the cave palace. He raised the cudgel, rammed it into the demon's chest, lifted him up into the air and went straight back to Purpuria to announce his first success. Watch him as he goes whistling back to that country.

Pig was in front of the throne room guarding the king and his master when suddenly he turned round to see Monkey carrying the demon through the air. "Hey," he complained, "that was an easy piece of work. If I'd known you were going to get him I'd have done it and got the credit." Before he had finished speaking Monkey brought the cloud down and threw the demon at the foot of the steps.

Pig ran over and struck the body with his rake, "I'll take the credit for that," he said.

"You? The credit?" Monkey replied.

"Don't try to rob me of it," Pig said, "I've got proof. Can't you see the nine holes I made in him with my rake?"

"See if he's got a head," said Monkey.

"So he doesn't have a head," Pig replied. "Now I know why he never moved when I hit him."

"Where's the master?" Monkey asked.

Chapter 70

"Talking to the king in the throne hall," said Pig.

"Go and ask him to come out," said Monkey, and Pig hurried up into the hall.

At Pig's nod Sanzang rose to his feet and came out at once to see Monkey, who thrust the declaration of war into his sleeve with the words, "Look after this, Master, and don't let the king see it."

Before the words were all out of his mouth the king too came out of

the hall to greet Monkey and say, "You're back, holy monk, venerable sir. How did the capture of the demon go?"

"Isn't that a demon at the foot of the steps?" Monkey asked, pointing. "I killed him."

"True," said the king, "it is the body of an evil spirit, but it isn't the Evil Star Matcher. We have twice seen the Evil Star Matcher with our own eyes. He is eighteen feet tall and nine feet across the shoulders. His face shines like gold and his voice is like thunder. He's not a miserable little wretch like that."

"You Majesty is right," Monkey replied, "this isn't him. It's just a little messenger devil I happened to meet. I killed him and brought him back as a trophy."

"Splendid," said the king, who was very pleased indeed, "splendid. This is the first success. We have often sent people out to find out what is happening but they never discover anything. Then you just have to go out, holy monk, to bring one straight back. You really do have divine powers."

"Fetch some warm wine," he ordered, "and give it to the reverend gentlemen."

"Never mind about the wine," said Monkey. "I want to ask Your Majesty whether the Golden Queen left any keepsakes when she went. If so, give me some." The word "keepsakes" cut the king to the heart. He could not help sobbing aloud with tears pouring down as he replied:

"When we were enjoying the festival that year

The Evil Star Matcher gave a mighty shout,

He took our wife to be his bandit queen;

To save the land we had to send her out.

We had no time for talk or parting words,

Nor could I see her off along her way.

She left no keepsake and no perfume bag;

We would be lonely here until today."

"Your Majesty is here," Monkey said, "so why upset yourself?" If the queen didn't leave any keepsake there must be some things in the palace that she's specially fond of. Give me one of them."

Chapter 70

975

Journey to the West

"What do you want it for?" the king asked.

"That demon king's magic powers are quite something," said Monkey, "and from what I've seen of his fire, smoke and sand he'll be really hard to capture. Even if I do capture him the queen might refuse to come back here with a stranger like me. I must have some favorite thing of hers so that she'll trust me and let me bring her back. That's why I want it."

"There is a pair of gold bracelets in her dressing room in the Sunlight Palace that she used to wear," the king replied. "She only took them off that day as it was the Dragonboat Festival and she was going to wear multicolored threads instead. She was very fond of those bracelets. They have been put away in her dressing table. We have not been able to bear the sight of them since she left us: seeing them is like seeing her lovely face, and it makes us feel even more ill than ever."

"Say no more," Monkey replied, "and have the bracelets brought here. If you can bring yourself to part with them, give me both. If you can't I'll take just one." The king ordered the Jade Queen to fetch them, which she did, handing them to the king.

At the sight of them he called out, "My beloved and tender—hearted queen," several times, then handed them to Monkey, who took them and put them on his arm.

The splendid Great Sage could not stay to drink the celebratory wine, but whistled back to Mount Unicorn on his somersault cloud. Now he had no interest in the view as he headed straight for the cave palace. While he was walking along he heard noisy shouts so he stopped to take a careful look around. About five hundred of the soldiers of all ranks guarding the entrance to Horndog Cave were Drawn up in massed array,

In close order.

Drawn up in massed array they held their weapons

Gleaming in the sun.

In close order they unfurled their banners

That fluttered in the breeze.

Tiger and bear generals did transformations;

Leopard and tiger – cat marshals were full of spirit.

Fiercely savage were the wolves;

The elephants were mighty and imposing.

Crafty hares and water – deer swung sword and halberd;

Great snakes and pythons carried cutlass and bow.

Chapter 70

976

Journey to the West

Orangutans that understood human speech

Controlled the formations and gathered intelligence.

When Monkey saw this he ventured no closer but went straight back the way he had come. Do you know why? Not because he was afraid of them. He went back to where he had killed the little devil, recovered the yellow flag and the gong, made a hand spell, thought of what he wanted to become, faced the wind, shook himself and turned into the likeness of Gocome. Then he started hitting the gong as he strode straight back towards Horndog Cave.

He was going to look at the layout of the cave when he heard an orangutan say, "You're back, Gocome."

"Yes," Monkey had to reply.

"Hurry up," the orangutan said. "Our king is waiting in the Flaying Pavilion to hear what you have to report."

As soon as he heard this Monkey hurried straight in through the main

gate beating his gong and looking around. He saw that rooms and halls had been carved out of the beetling crag. On either side bloomed rare and precious flowers, while all around stood ancient cypresses and tall pines. Before he realized it he was through the inner gate, and suddenly looking up he saw a pavilion made light by the eight windows in it. In the pavilion was a splendid chair inlaid with gold on which a demon king was sitting upright. He was a truly terrifying sight. This is what he looked like:

A shimmering red glow rose from the top of his head;

A mighty and murderous air burst from his chest.

Sharp were the fangs that protruded from his mouth;

Red smoke rose from the scorched hair at his temples.

The bristles of his moustache were like embedded arrows;

His body was covered with hair like brushed – up felt.

Eyes bulged like bells to rival the Evil Star:

Hands held an iron mace like Mahadeva.

When Monkey saw the evil spirit he acted towards him in an offhand way, showing no trace of respect, but looking away and keeping on hitting his gong. "So you're back, are you?" said the demon king. Monkey did not reply.

"Gocome," the demon king asked again, "you're back, are you?" Still Monkey did not reply. The demon king then went over to him, grabbed him and said, "Why are you still beating your gong now you're back home?

And why don't you answer when I ask you a question?"

Chapter 70

977

Journey to the West

"What do you mean by your 'Why? Why? Why?'" Monkey replied.

"I told you I didn't want to go but you insisted. When I got there I saw huge numbers of foot soldiers and cavalry drawn up in order of battle.

As soon as I was spotted they shouted, 'Seize the demon! Seize the demon!' They pushed and shoved and dragged and carried me into the city, where I saw their king. He told them to cut my head off, but luckily his two groups of advisers said that in international conflicts envoys should not be executed, so I was spared. They took the declaration of war, marched me out of the city, gave me thirty strokes in front of their army, and let me come back here to report. Before long they'll be here to fight you."

"In other words," the monster said, "you had a bad time. I don't blame you for refusing to answer when I asked you those questions."

"It wasn't that," said Monkey. "The reason I didn't answer was because of the pain."

"How strong are their forces?" the demon king asked.

"I was reeling from shock and too badly frightened by the beating to be able to count them," Monkey replied.

"All I could see were masses of weapons drawn up there:

Bows and arrows, spears and sabers, suits of armor,

Dagger–axes, halberds, swords and tasseled banners.

Pikes, partisans, helmets,

Axes, round shields, and iron caltrops.

Long staves,

Short cudgels,

Steel forks, cannons and casques.

They were wearing tall boots, hats and quilted jackets,

And carrying cudgels, small pellet–bows and maces of bronze."

"That's neither here nor there," laughed the demon king when he heard this. "Weapons like that can be finished off in a single blaze. Go and tell the Golden Queen all about it and ask her not to upset herself. Ever since she heard me lose my temper this morning and decide to go to war she's been crying her eyes out. Tell her that their army is so fierce and brave that they're bound to beat us. That'll calm her down for a while."

This delighted Monkey, who thought, "Just what I want." Watch him as he goes the way he knows, through the side door and across the hall. Inside there were tall buildings: it was not like outside. He went straight to the women's quarters at the back, where he saw from a distance a handsome and decorated doorway. That was where the Golden Queen lived. When he went to see her there were two groups of fox and deer spirits dressed Chapter 70

like beautiful women to wait on her. The queen sat in the middle with her fragrant cheeks in her hands and tears pouring from both of her eyes. Indeed, she had

A beautiful face so soft and charming,

A bewitching countenance so fair.

But her raven—black hair was uncombed

And piled untidily on her head;

She did not want to dress up

And wore no hair ornaments or rings.

Her face was unpowdered,

And she wore no rouge.

Her hair was not oiled

But all in a tangle.

She pouted her cherry lips,

Ground her silver teeth,

Frowned with her brows like moth antennae,

And let her eyes sparkle with tears.

All her heart

Was filled with memories of Purpuria's king;

All the time

She longed to escape from the net that held her.

Truly,

Ill – fated have been many lovely ladies

Left in their wordless grief to face the Eastern wind.

Monkey went up to her and greeted her with a "Hello."

Chapter 70

979

Journey to the West

"You impudent boorish freak," said the queen. "I remember how when I was living in splendor with my king in Purpuria even the king's tutor and the prime minister had to prostrate themselves in the dust when they met me: they would never have dared look me in the face. How dare you say 'Hello' to me, you lout? Where are you from, you coarse beast?"

"Please don't be angry, ma'am," the serving women said. "He's one of His Majesty's most trusted lieutenants.

His name is Gocome. He was the one who was sent with the declaration of war this morning."

At this the queen controlled her temper and asked, "Did you go inside Purpuria when you delivered the declaration?"

"I took it straight to the capital and right into the throne hall," said Monkey. "I saw the king himself and got an answer from him."

"What did the king say when you saw him?" the queen asked.

"I have already told His Majesty here what he said about war and about the dispositions of their forces,"

Monkey replied. "But there was also a private message from the king, who misses you, ma'am. There's something private I have come to report to you, but with all these attendants around this is no place to talk."

When the queen heard this she dismissed her foxes and deer. Brother Monkey shut the door of the palace, rubbed his face, and turned back into himself. "Don't be afraid of me," he said to her. "I'm a monk sent by the Great Tang in the East to see the Buddha and fetch the scriptures at the Thunder Monastery in India. My master is Tang Sanzang, the younger brother of the Tang Emperor. I'm Sun Wukong, his senior disciple.

When we were in your capital to present our passport for approval I saw a notice calling for doctors that your king and his ministers had posted. Then I used my medical skills to cure the illness he had contracted from missing you. When we were drinking at the banquet he gave to thank me he told me that you had been carried off by the evil spirit. As I can subdue dragons and tigers I was specially invited to capture the demon, rescue you and take you back to your country. I was the one who defeated the vanguard and killed the little devil.

When I saw from outside the gates how ferocious the demon king was I turned myself into Gocome's double and came here to bring you a message."

The queen said nothing when she heard this. Then Monkey produced the bracelets and presented them to her with both hands.

"If you don't believe me, just look; where did these come from?" he asked.

As soon as she saw them the queen burst into tears, came down from where she was sitting, bowed to him in thanks and said, "Reverend sir, if you really can save me and get me back to court I will remember my deep debt of gratitude to you even when I'm old and toothless."

"Let me ask you something," said Monkey. "What treasure does he use to produce that fire, smoke and sand?"

"It's no treasure," the queen said, "just three golden bells. As soon as he shakes the first one three thousand feet of burning flames shoot out. When he shakes the second one a three–thousand–foot column of smoke gushes out to kipper people. And when he shakes it the third time a blinding three–thousand–foot sandstorm blows up. The fire and smoke are nothing much, but the sand is lethal. If it gets up your nostrils it can kill you."

"It's terrible," Monkey said, "terrible. I've experienced it and I had to sneeze a couple of times. I wonder where he keeps the bells."

"He never puts them down," the queen replied. "He keeps them at his waist whether he's going somewhere, staying at home, sitting down or sleeping. They are always with him."

"If you still care for Purpuria and want to see your king again you must forget about your distress and grief for the moment," said Monkey. "Make yourself look attractive and happy. Talk to him like a loving wife and get him to give you the bells to look after. When I've stolen them and defeated the monster I'll take you back to be reunited with your royal husband so that you can live in peace together."

The queen did as Monkey said while he turned himself back into the demon king's trusted lieutenant, opened the doors again and called the serving women back in. "Go to the pavilion at the front, Gocome," the queen said, "and ask His Majesty to come here as I've something to say to him."

The splendid Monkey assented and went to the Flaying Pavilion, where he said to the evil spirit, "Your Majesty, Her Majesty would like to see you."

"All she usually does is curse me, so why is she sending for me now?" the demon king happily asked. "When she asked me about the king of Purpuria I told her, 'He doesn't want you any more: he's got a new queen now.'

When she heard that Her Majesty stopped missing him. That's why she sent me out with this invitation."

"You're very able," the demon king said, "and when we've destroyed Purpuria I'll make you my high chancellor in personal attendance."

Monkey thanked the demon king for his kindness and hurried to the door of the living quarters at the back, where the queen greeted him with happy smiles and her hands on his arms. The king stepped back with an awkward noise.

"Don't," he said, "don't. I'm very grateful for this sign of your affection, ma'am, but I don't dare stand next to you in case it hurts my hand."

"Sit down, Your Majesty," the queen said. "I have something to say to you."

"There's no objection to you speaking," the demon king replied. "I'm very much obliged to Your Majesty for condescending to love me," she said. "For three years now you have not shared my pillow although we were fated from our earlier lives to be married. I never expected that Your Majesty would treat me as a stranger instead of your wife. I remember that when I was queen of Purpuria the king gave all the valuable tribute from foreign countries to the queen to look after when he had seen it. But you have no treasures here. The servants wear marten hides and feed on blood. I have seen no fine silks, brocades, gold or pearls here. All the covers and blankets are of skins and felt. Or perhaps you do have some treasures that you won't let me see or look after because you regard me as a stranger. They say you have three bells. I think they must be treasures. Why do you always keep them with you, even when you're travelling or sitting down? There's no reason why you shouldn't give them to me to look after. I can give them to you when you need them. That would be one way of being a wife to you and it would show that we trust each other in our hearts. The only reason why you don't do this must because you regard me as an outsider."

At this the demon king burst into loud laughter, then bowed to her and said, "Ma'am, you're justified in your complaint. Here are the treasures, and today I'm giving them to you to look after." He undid his clothing to bring them out. Monkey watched with unwavering eyes as the monster pulled two or three layers of clothing aside to bring out the three bells that he carried next to his skin.

Putting cotton—wool in to muffle them he wrapped them up in a piece of leopard skin and handed them to the queen with the words, "They're nothing, but please look after them very carefully. Whatever you do don't Chapter 70

shake them."

"I understand," the queen replied as she accepted them. "I shall keep them on my dressing table and nobody will move them at all." Then she gave these orders: "My little ones, lay on a banquet. His Majesty and I are going to have a few drinks to celebrate our happy union." At

once the serving women brought in fruit, vegetables and the flesh of water deer, raccoon – dogs, deer and hare and poured out coconut toddy that they offered them. The queen made herself so bewitchingly attractive that she swept the evil spirit off his feet.

Monkey meanwhile went to fetch the bells. Feeling and groping, he found his way to the dressing – table, gently took the three bells, crept out through the doors of the inner quarters and left the cave palace. When he reached the Flaying Pavilion there was nobody about, so he opened the leopard – skin wrapper to have a look.

One of the bells was as big as a teacup and the other two the size of fists. With reckless folly he tore the cottonwool apart. There was a loud clang and smoke, fire and sand came gushing out. Desperately Monkey tried to stop them but could do nothing. The pavilion was by now ablaze, sending the evil spirits on the gates all crowding in alarm inside the inner quarters.

"Put the fire out," said the demon king, who was badly rattled. As he rushed out to look he saw that Gocome had taken the golden bells, went up to him and shouted, "Dirty slave! Why did you steal my precious golden bells? What sort of nonsense are you up to? Arrest him!" The tiger and bear generals, the leopard and tiger – cat marshals, the elephants, gray wolves, cunning water deer, crafty hares, long snakes, great pythons, orangutans and all the other troops on the gates rushed him in a crowd.

Monkey was thrown into panic. Dropping the golden bells he turned back into himself, pulled out his gold – banded As – You – Will cudgel, went and charged at them, going through his cudgel routines and lashing out wildly. The demon king took his treasures back and ordered, "Shut the main gates." At this some of the demons shut the gates and others went into battle. Unable to get away, Monkey put his cudgel away, shook himself and turned into a silly fly that attached itself to a spot on the stone wall which was not burning. None of the demons could find him. "Your Majesty," they reported, "the thief's got away, the thief's got away."

"Did he get out through the gates?" the demon king asked.

"The front gates are firmly locked and bolted," the demons replied. "He can't have got out through them."

"Make a careful search," said the demon king, and while some of them fetched water to douse the fire the others made a close search but

found no trace of him.

"What sort of thief is he?" the demon king asked with fury. "He's got a hell of a nerve, turning himself into Gocome's double, coming in here to report back to me, then staying with me till he found a chance to steal my treasures. It's luck he didn't take them out, if he'd taken them over the mountain top and there had been a heavenly wind it would have been a disaster."

"Your Majesty's good fortune is divine," said the tiger general, stepping forward. "It was because our luck has not yet run out that he was discovered."

Then the bear marshal came forward to say, "Your Majesty, the thief was none other than the Sun Wukong who beat our vanguard warrior. I think he must have run into Gocome when he was on his way, killed him, taken his yellow flag, gong and ivory tablet, and turned into his double to come here and deceive Your Majesty."

"Yes, yes," the demon king replied, "you're clearly right. Little ones," he ordered, "make another careful search and be on your guard. Whatever you do, don't open the gates and let him out." It is rightly said that Chapter 70

By being too clever one becomes a fool;

What was once a joke can turn out to be real.

If you don't know how Brother Monkey got out through the demons' gates, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 71

Under a False Name Monkey Beats the Demon Hound

Guanyin Appears to Subdue the Demon King

Matter has always been empty;

Emptiness said to be matter is only natural.

When one penetrates the dhyana of matter's emptiness

There is no need for cinnabar to be refined into elixir.

Rest not when pursuing perfection of virtue and conduct;

Endure suffering to achieve hard—won skills.

Sometimes one only turns to heaven when one's actions are complete,
To win an unchanging and immortal face.

The story tells how the Evil Star Matcher had the front and back gates tightly closed while Monkey was hunted for. The din went on till dusk, but no sign of him did they find. The demon king sat in the Flaying Pavilion, where he called his demons together and issued orders to the guards on all the gates to carry bells, shout passwords, beat drums and strike clappers. Everyone was to have an arrow on his bowstring or a sword unsheathed as he took his turn to keep watch during the night. Sun Wukong, who had turned into a fly, was sitting by the gates. Seeing how strict the security was at the front gates he spread his wings and flew to the gateway of the living quarters to take a look. He saw the Golden Queen slumped across a low table, the tears flowing down as she wept quietly in her sorrow, so he flew inside and landed lightly on the loose black clouds of her hair to listen to what she was crying about. A moment later she said tearfully, "My lord, you and I, Burnt in an earlier life the incense of separation,

And now I have encountered an evil demon king.

For three years I have been gone: when will we two be reunited?

Great is the grief of mandarin ducks that are parted.

Just when the priest had brought me your message

Our union has been severed once more and the monkey is dead.

Because he was too curious about the golden bells

I long for you now more desperately than ever."

When he heard this Monkey went behind her ear, where he whispered, "Don't be afraid, Your Majesty. I'm the holy monk, the

venerable Sun Wukong, who was sent from your country. I'm still alive. It was all because I was too impatient. I went to your dressing table and stole the golden bells. While you were drinking with the demon king I sneaked out to the pavilion in the front, but I couldn't restrain myself from opening them up to take a look at them. I didn't mean to, but I tore the cotton wool muffling the bells, and the moment they rang flame, smoke and sand came gushing out. I panicked, threw the bells down, turned back into myself, and tried hard to fight my way out with my iron cudgel. When I failed and was scared they'd kill me I turned into a fly, and hid on the door pivot till just now. The demon king has made the security precautions even stricter and he won't open the doors. Will you act like a wife to him and lure him in here to sleep so that I can escape and find some other way of rescuing you?"

When the queen heard this she shivered and shook, and her hair stood on end as if a spirit were pulling it; she was terrified, as if her heart was being pounded by a pestle. "Are you a man or a ghost?" she asked, the tears streaming down.

"Neither man nor ghost," he replied. "At the moment I've turned into a fly and I'm here. Don't be afraid. Hurry up and ask the demon king here." The queen still refused to believe him.

"Stop appearing in this nightmare," she said in a low voice through her tears.

"I'm not in a nightmare," said Monkey. "If you don't believe me put your hand out and open it. I'll jump down into it for you to see." The queen then put out her open hand. Monkey flew down and landed lightly on her jade palm. He was just like

A black bean on a lotus flower,

A bee resting on a peony blossom,

A raisin fallen into a hydrangea,

A black spot on a wild lily stalk.

The queen raised her hand and said, "Holy monk."

"I'm the holy monk transformed," Monkey replied. Only then did the queen believe him.

"When I invite the demon king here what are you going to do?" she asked.

"There's an old saying that there's nothing like liquor for ending a life," Monkey replied, "and another that there's nothing like liquor for solving any problem. Liquor's very useful stuff. The best thing is to give him plenty to drink. Call one of your personal slave－girls in and let me have a look at her so I can make myself look like her and wait on you. Then I'll be able to make my move."

The queen did as he told her. "Spring Beauty, where are you?" she called, and a fox with a beautiful face came in round the screen, knelt down and said, "What orders did Your Majesty call me in to receive?"

"Tell them to come in and light the silk lanterns, burn some musk, and help me into the front room," the queen said. "Then I shall ask His Majesty to bed." Spring Beauty went to the front and called seven or eight deer and fox spirits who lined up on either side of her. They carried two pairs of lanterns and one pair of portable incense －burners. By the time the queen bowed to them with her hands together the Great Sage had already flown off.

Spreading his wings, the splendid Monkey flew straight to the top of Spring Beauty's head, where he pulled out one of his hairs, blew a magic breath on it, and called, "Change!" It turned into a sleep insect that landed lightly on Spring Beauty's face. Now when sleep insects reach a human face they crawl into the nostrils, and once they are inside the person goes to sleep. Spring Beauty did indeed start feeling sleepy. She could not keep on her feet, but swayed about and felt dozy as she hurried to where she had been resting before, collapsed head first and fell into a deep sleep. Brother Monkey then jumped down, shook himself, turned into Spring Beauty's exact likeness and went back round the screen to line up with the others.

As the Golden Queen walked into the front part of the palace a little devil saw her and reported to the Evil Star Matcher, "The queen's here, Your Majesty." The demon king hurried out of the Flaying Pavilion to greet her.

"Your Majesty," the queen said, "the smoke and fire have been put out and there's no sign of the thief. As it's late now I've come to urge you

to come to bed."

"How considerate you are, my queen," the monster replied utterly delighted to see her. "The thief was Sun Wukong who defeated my vanguard warrior, then killed my lieutenant and came here disguised as him to fool us. We've searched but can't find a trace of him. It makes me feel uneasy."

"The wretch must have got away," the queen replied. "Relax, Your Majesty, stop worrying, and come to bed."

Seeing the queen standing there and inviting him so earnestly the demon king could not refuse too insistently, so he told the other demons to be careful with the fires and lamps and be on their guard against robbers before he went to the living quarters at the back with the queen. Monkey, disguised as Spring Beauty, led their way with the other slave girls.

"Bring wine for His Majesty," the queen said. "He's exhausted."

"Indeed I am," said the demon king with a smile, "indeed I am. Fetch some at once. It'll calm our nerves." The imitation Spring Beauty and the other servants then laid out fruit and high meat and set a table and chairs. The queen raised a cup and the demon king did likewise; each gave the other a drink from their own.

The imitation Spring Beauty, who was standing beside them, said as she held the jug, "As tonight is the first time Your Majesties have given each other a drink from your own cups I hope that you will each drain them dry for double happiness." They did indeed both refill their cups and drain them again. "As this is so happy an occasion for Your Majesties why don't we slave girls sing and dance for you?" the imitation Spring Beauty suggested.

Before the words were all out of her mouth melodious voices could be heard as the singing and dancing began. The two of them drank a lot more before the queen called for the singing and dancing to end. The slave girls divided themselves into their groups and went to line up outside the screen, leaving only the imitation Spring Beauty to hold the jug and serve them wine. The queen and the demon king spoke to

each other like husband and wife, and the queen was so full of sensuality that the demon king's bones turned soft and his sinews went numb. The only trouble was that the poor demon was not lucky enough to enjoy her favours.

Indeed, it was a case of "happiness over nothing, like a cat biting a piss bubble."

After talking and laughing for a while the queen asked, "Were the treasures damaged, Your Majesty?"

"Those are treasures that were cast long, long ago," the demon king said, "so they couldn't possibly be damaged. All that happened was that the thief tore the cotton wool that was muffling the bells and the leopard skin wrapper was burnt."

"Where have they been put away?" the queen asked.

"No need for that," the demon king replied. "I carry them at my waist." Hearing this, the imitation Spring Beauty pulled out a handful of his hairs, chewed them up into little bits, crept closer to the demon king, put the pieces of hair on the demon's body, blew three magic breaths, said "Change!" very quietly, and turned the pieces of hair into three revolting pests: lice, fleas and bedbugs. They all made for the demon king's body and started biting his skin wildly. Itching unbearably, the demon king put his hands inside his clothing to rub the irritation. He caught a few of the lice between his fingers and took them to a lamp for a closer look.

When the queen saw them she said mockingly, "Your Majesty, your shirt must be filthy. It can't have been washed for ages. I expect that's why they're there."

"I've never had insects like these before," he said in embarrassment. "I would have to make a fool of myself tonight."

"What do you mean, making a fool of yourself, Your Majesty?" the queen said with a smile. "As the saying goes, even the emperor has three imperial lice. Undress and I'll catch them for you." The demon king really did undo his belt and take his clothes off.

The imitation Spring Beauty was standing beside the demon king looking closely at the fleas leaping around between each layer of clothing, on which were rows of enormous bedbugs. Lice and nits were crowded as closely together as ants coming out of their nest. When the demon king took off the third layer of clothing and revealed

his flesh the golden bells were also swarming with countless insects.

"Your Majesty," said the imitation Spring Beauty, "hand me the bells so that I can catch the lice on them for you." The demon king was so overcome with shame and alarm that he handed the three bells to Spring Beauty, not noticing that she was an impostor.

The imitation Spring Beauty took the bells and made a long show of catching lice. When she saw the demon king looking down to shake his clothes she hid the golden bells, pulled out a hair and turned it into three more bells just like the originals that she carried to the lamp to examine.

She then wriggled, braced herself, put the lice, bedbugs and fleas back on her body and returned the imitation bells to the monster. He took them but was still too befuddled to see that they were copies. Passing them with both his hands to the queen he said, "Put them away now, but be very careful with them, not like before." The queen took the bells, quietly opened the chest, put them inside, and locked them in with a golden lock. Then she drank several more cups of wine with the demon king.

"Dust and clean the ivory bed," she ordered the serving women, "and spread the brocade quilt. His Majesty and I are going to bed."

The demon king expressed his thanks but said, "I have no such luck. I don't dare go with you. I'll take one of the palace women with me and go to bed in the Western part of the palace. I wish you a good night by yourself, ma'am." With that each of them went to bed, and we will say no more of that.

Meanwhile the successful imitation Spring Beauty tucked the treasures into her belt and turned back into Monkey. He shook himself, took back the sleep insect, and headed for the front of the palace, where nightsticks and bells sounded together to mark the third watch. Splendid Monkey made himself invisible by making a spell with his hands and saying the words of it. Going straight to the gates he saw that they were very firmly locked and bolted, so he brought out his gold—banded cudgel, pointed it at the door and made unlocking magic. The gates swung easily open.

Hurrying outside he stood by the gates and shouted two or three times at the top of his voice, "Evil Star Matcher, give us back our Golden Queen."

This startled all the devils, who hurried to look and saw that the gates were open. Quickly they fetched lamps to find the locks and fasten the gates once more. Several of them were sent running back inside to report,

"Your Majesty, there's someone outside the main gates shouting your title and demanding the Golden Queen."

The slave girls hurried out to say very quietly, "Stop yelling. His Majesty's only just gone to sleep." Monkey gave another loud shout at the front gates, but the little devils still dared not disturb their master. This happened three or four times over, but they never went in to report. The Great Sage kept up his din till daybreak, by when his patience was exhausted and he swung his iron cudgel to hit the gates. This so alarmed the demons big and small that while some of them barricaded the gates the others went in to report.

As soon as the demon king woke up and heard the cacophonous din he got up, dressed and emerged from his bed—curtains to ask, "What's all the shouting about?"

"Sir," said the kneeling slave girls, "someone's been shouting and cursing outside the cave half the night. We don't know who it is. Now he's attacking the gates."

As the demon king went out through the gates of the palace several panic-stricken little devils appeared to kowtow to him and say, "There's someone shouting and cursing outside. He's demanding the Golden Queen, and if we say so much as half a 'no' he goes on and on at us, swearing in a thoroughly horrible way. When Your Majesty still hadn't come out at daybreak he got so desperate he started attacking the gates."

"Don't open them," the demon king said. "Go and ask him where he's from and what he's called. Report back as quickly as you can."

The little devils hurried off to ask through the gates, "Who are you, knocking at our gates?"

Chapter 71

"I'm your grandpa sent by Purpuria to take the Golden Queen back to her own country," Monkey replied.

When the little devils heard this they reported it to the demon king, who went back to the living quarters at the back to question the queen about why the attacker had come.

The queen had only just arisen and had not yet done her hair or washed when slave girls came in to report,

"His Majesty's here." The queen hastily tidied up her clothes and let her black tresses hang loose as she went outside to greet him.

He had just sat down and had not yet asked her any questions when little demons were heard again asking,

"The Grand Par from over there has smashed the gates down."

"How many officers are there in your country, ma'am?" The demon king asked with a smile.

"Inside the palace there are forty–eight brigades of horse and foot, and a thousand good officers; and there are ever so many marshals and commanders on the frontiers," the queen replied.

"Are any called Grand Par?" the demon king asked. "When I was in the palace all I knew about was helping His Majesty in the inner quarters and instructing the consorts and concubines every morning and evening," the queen said. "There were no end of things happening outside. How could I possibly remember the names?"

"This one calls himself Grand Par," the demon king replied. "There's no such name I can think of in the book *The Hundred Surnames.* You're a very intelligent and well–born lady, ma'am, and you've lived in a royal palace. You must have read a lot of books. Can you remember coming across that name in any of them?"

"There's a passage in the *Thousand Word Classic* that goes, 'received grand instruction,'" the queen replied. "I think that must refer to him."

"I'm sure you're right," the demon king said with pleasure, "I'm sure you're right." He then got up, took his leave of the queen, went to the Flaying Pavilion, fastened his armor on neatly, mustered his devil soldiers, had the gates opened, and went straight outside with his

flower – scattering battle – axe in his hand.

"Who's the Grand Par from Purpuria?" he yelled stridently at the top of his voice.

Grasping his gold – banded cudgel in his right hand and pointing with his left Monkey replied, "What are you shouting at me for, nephew?" The sight of him drove the demon king into a fury.

"Damn you," he shouted:

"You've a face just like a monkey's;

You resemble a macaque.

A ghost is what you look like;

Don't try to knock me back."

Chapter 71

"Impudent devil," laughed Monkey, "trying to bully your superiors and push your master around. You're blind. I remember how when I made havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago all the nine heavenly generals only dared speak to me with the greatest respect. If I make you call me Grandpa I'm letting you off lightly."

"Tell me your name immediately," the demon king shouted. "What fighting skills have you got that give you the nerve to come rampaging here?"

"You'd have done better not to ask me what I'm called," Monkey replied. "But as you insist on me telling you I'm afraid you'll be in a hopeless mess. Come here and stand still while I tell you: Heaven and earth were the parents that bore me;

My foetus was formed from the sun and moon's essence.

The magic rock was pregnant for years beyond number;

Strange indeed was the miraculous root's gestation.

When I was born the Three Positives were at their height;

Now I have been converted all is in harmony.

Once I was declared the chief of all the demons,

Who bowed to me by the red cliff as subduer of monsters.

The Jade Emperor issued a decree of summons,

And the Great White Planet came with the edict,

Inviting me to Heaven to take up my office,

But as Protector of the Horses I had no joy.

When I first planned rebellion in my mountain cave

Boldly I led my armies against the Jade Emperor,

The Pagoda – carrying Heavenly King and Prince Nezha

Were utterly helpless when they fought against me.

Then the White Planes made a new suggestion,

And brought another edict urging me to make peace

I was made Great Sage Equaling Heaven,

And proclaimed as one of the pillars of the state.

Chapter 71

989

Journey to the West

Because I disrupted the banquet of peaches

And stole elixir when drunk I met with disaster.

Lord Lao Zi submitted a memorial in person,

And the Queen Mother of the West did homage to the throne.

Knowing that I was running riot with the law,

They mustered heavenly forces and issued movement orders.

A hundred thousand vicious stars and evil planets

Were packed in close array with their swords and their halberds.

Heaven – and – earth nets were spread across the mountain

As all of the soldiers raised their weapons together.

A bout of bitter fighting left neither side the victor,

So Guanyin recommended the warrior Erlang.

The two of us fought together for mastery;

He was helped by the Seven Brothers who come from Plum Hill.

Each of us played the hero and did our transformations:

The three sages at the gates of Heaven opened the clouds.

Then Lord Lao Zi dropped his diamond noose,

And the gods led me as a prisoner to the steps of the throne – hall.

They did not bother with a detailed indictment:

The sentence was death by a thousand cuts.

Axe and hammer could not till me,

And I was unharmed by sword or saber.

Fire and thunderbolts were neither here nor there;

They had no way to destroy my immortal body.

I was taken under escort to the Tushita Heaven,

And all was arranged to refine me in the furnace.

Only when full time was up did they open up the vessel,

And I came bounding out from the middle of the crucible.

In my hands I was wielding this As – You – Will cudgel

As I somersaulted up to the Jade Emperor's throne.

All the stars and constellations went into hiding,

And I could play the vandal in the palaces of Heaven.

The Miraculous Investigator rushed to invite the Buddha,

Then Sakyamuni and I both displayed our powers.

Turning my somersaults in the palm of his hand

I roamed all over the heavens before my return.

The Buddha then, using both foresight and deception,

Crushed and held me at the ends of the heavens.

After a period of over five hundred years

My body was delivered and I could once more play up.

Guarding the Tang Priest on his journey to the West,

Brother Sun Wukong is very intelligent.

I subdue the demons on the Westward road:

Every evil spirit is struck with terror."

When the demon king heard him tell that he was Sun Wukong he said, "So you're the so – and – so who made havoc in Heaven. If you were released to guard the Tang Priest on his journey West then you should be an your way there. Why are you being such a busybody and making trouble for me? You're acting as if you were the slave of Purpuria. By coming here you've thrown your life away."

"Thieving damned monster," Monkey shouted back. "You don't know what you're talking about. I was politely invited to help by the king of Purpuria. He addressed me very respectfully and treated me well. I'm a thousand times higher than that king. He treated me as if I were his father and mother or a god. How can you say I'm acting like a slave? I'll get you, you monster, for bullying your superiors and trying to

push your master around. Stay there and take this from your grandpa." The monster then moved his hands and feet as fast as he could, dodged the blow from the cudgel and struck back at Brother Monkey's face with his flower – scattering axe. It was a fine battle. Just watch!

Chapter 71

991

Journey to the West

The gold – banded As – You – Will cudgel,

The flower – scattering axe and its wind – keen blade.

One ground his teeth with terrible ferocity;

The other gnashed his molars and displayed his might.

One was the Great Sage Equaling Heaven descended to earth,

The other an evil demon king come down to the lower world.

Both snorted out clouds and shining mists that lit up the heavenly palace.

Sent stones and sand flying that blotted out the Dipper.

They came and went through many a movement,

Twisting and turning and giving off golden light.

Each used all of his talents to the full;

Both staked the whole of their magical powers.

One wanted to take the queen back to the capital;

The other would happily have stayed with her in the cave.

There was no deep reason for the struggle:

He was ready to give his life for the sake of the king.

When the two of them had fought fifty rounds without result the demon king realized that Monkey was too strong a fighter for him to be able to beat. Blocking the iron cudgel with his axe the demon said, "Stop, Sun the Novice. I haven't had my breakfast yet today. Let me

eat, then I'll have it out with you."

Monkey was well aware that he wanted to fetch the bells, so he put his cudgel away and said, "A hero doesn't chase an exhausted hare. Off you go. Have a good meal, and get ready to come back and die."

The demon quickly turned and rushed inside, where he said to the queen, "Get me my treasures at once."

"What for?" she asked.

"The man challenging me to battle this morning was a disciple of the monk who's going to fetch the scriptures," he said. "He's called Sun Wukong, or Sun the Novice, and Grand Par was just a nickname. I've been battling it out with him all this time, but still there's no outcome. Just wait while I take my treasures out and set off smoke and flames to burn that ape." These words made the queen feel very uneasy. If she didn't Chapter 71

fetch the bells, she was worried that he might be suspicious, but if she did she feared that Sun the Novice would be killed. As she was hesitating the demon king pressed her again: "Hurry up and fetch them." She had no choice but to undo the lock, bring out the three bells and hand them to the demon king, who took them and went outside the cave again. The queen sat in the inner quarters, her tears pouring down like rain, as she thought that Monkey would not possibly be able to escape with his life. Neither of them realized that the bells were only copies.

Once outside the cave the demon stood upwind and shouted, "Stay where you are, Sun the Novice. Watch while I ring these bells."

"You have your bells, but why shouldn't I have mine?" Monkey replied. "You can ring yours, so why shouldn't I ring mine?"

"What bells have you got?" the demon king asked. "Show me." Monkey pinched his iron cudgel to make it into an embroidery needle that he tucked into his ear then brought out the three real treasures from at his waist.

"Here are my purple gold bells," he said to the demon king. The sight of them came as a shock to the demon.

"That's funny," he thought, "very funny. Why are his bells exactly the same as mine? Even if they'd been cast from the same mould they'd not have been properly smoothed: you'd expect some extra marks or missing knobs. How can they be identical with this?"

"Where did you get your bells from?" he went on to ask again.

"Where are yours from, dear nephew?" Monkey replied.

Being honest, the demon king replied, "These bells of mine, Come from deep in the Way of the Immortal of Great Purity,

Are made of gold long refined in the Eight Trigrams Furnace

Formed into bells renowned as ultimate treasures

Left by Lord Lao Zi till the present day."

"That's where my bells come from too," Monkey replied with a smile.

"How were they made?" the demon king asked.

"These bells of mine," said Monkey,

"Were made of gold refined in the furnace

Chapter 71

993

Journey to the West

When Lord Lao Zi made elixir in the Tushita Palace.

They are cyclical treasures.

The two threes make six:

Mine are the female and yours are the male."

"The bells are golden elixir treasures," the demon king said, "not birds or beasts. They can't be male or female.

As long as they yield what's precious when they're rung they're good ones."

"Words prove nothing," said Monkey. "Show it by actions. Shake yours first." The demon king then rang his first bell three times. No fire

came out. He rang his second three times. No smoke came out. He rang his third three times, and no sand came out either.

"Very odd," he said, making wild gestures, "very odd. The world's changed. These bells must be hen-pecked.

When the males see the females they don't dare to do their stuff."

"Stop, nephew," said Monkey. "Now I'm going to shake mine to show you what happens." The splendid ape then grasped all three bells in one hand and rang them together. Watch as clouds of red flames, black smoke and yellow sand all come gushing out, setting the trees and the mountain ablaze. Monkey then said the words of another spell and shouted "Wind!" towards the Southeast; and a wind did indeed spring up that fanned the flames. With the power of the wind behind them the flames and smoke filled the heavens, blazing red and deepest black, and the earth was covered by the yellow sandstorm. The Evil Star Matcher's souls fled from his body in his terror, but he had nowhere to turn: amid that fire there was no way of escaping with his life.

Then a penetrating shout was heard from mid-air: "Sun Wukong, I am here." Monkey quickly looked up and saw that it was the Bodhisattva Guanyin holding her vase of pure water in her left hand and a sprig of willow in her right with which to sprinkle sweet dew and put out the flames. In his alarm Monkey hid the bells at his waist, put the palms of his hands together and prostrated himself in a kowtow. The Bodhisattva flicked a few drops of sweet dew from her willow sprig and in an instant both flames and smoke disappeared, while no sign of the yellow sand remained to be seen.

"I did not realize, Most Merciful One, that you were coming down to the mortal world," said Brother Monkey as he kowtowed, "and it was wrong of me to fail to keep out of your way. May I venture to ask where you are going, Bodhisattva?"

"I am here especially to find and take this evil monster," the Bodhisattva replied.

"What is the monster's background, and how can he put you to the trouble of capturing him in your illustrious person?" Monkey asked.

"He is a golden-haired giant hound on which I used to ride," the Bodhisattva replied. "The boy in charge of it fell asleep and failed to keep proper guard over it, so that the wicked beast bit through its iron chains and escaped to save the king of Purpuria from disaster."

When Monkey heard this he hastily bowed and said, "You have it the wrong way round, Bodhisattva. He's been mistreating the king and his queen, and thus damaging public morality. So how can you say that he has saved the king from disaster when in fact he has brought him disaster?"

"You would not know," the Bodhisattva replied, "that when the previous king of Purpuria was reigning and the present king was the crown prince and had not yet taken the throne he was a superb archer and huntsman.

Once he led his men and horses hunting with falcon and hound. They came to the Fallen Phoenix Slope, where a young peacock and peahen, two children of the Buddha's mother in the West, the Bodhisattva Maurya Vidya Rani were resting. When the king shot with his bow he wounded the cock, while the hen died with an arrow still in her. After the Buddha's mother realized to her regret what had happened she ordered that the prince should be separated from his wife for three years and suffer himself the way birds do when they are parted from their mates. At the time I was riding that hound and we both heard her say that. I never imagined that the beast would remember it and come back to mistreat the queen and thus save the king from disaster.

That was three years ago, and now that the misdeed has been paid for it was fortunate that you came along to cure the king. I am here to recover the wicked and evil creature."

"Bodhisattva," said Monkey, "this may well be so, but he did sully the queen, damage public morality, offend ethics and break the law. You can't let him off a non–capital punishment. Let me give him twenty blows before handing him over for you to take back."

"Wukong," said the Bodhisattva, "as you know I am here you really ought to show me the respect I deserve and spare him completely. This still counts as one of your successes in subduing a demon. If you hit him with your cudgel it'll kill him."

Monkey dared not disobey, but bowed and said, "If you're taking him back to the ocean with you, Bodhisattva, you mustn't let him escape and come down to the human world again. That would be quite a

catastrophe."

Only then did the Bodhisattva shout, "Wicked beast! Turn back into your own form! What are you waiting for?" The monster could be seen doing a roll and turning back into himself. Then he shook his fur for the Bodhisattva to mount on his back. The Bodhisattva looked down at his neck to see that the three golden bells were missing. "Wukong," she said, "give me my bells back."

"I don't know where they are," Monkey said.

"Thieving ape," the Bodhisattva shouted. "If you hadn't stolen those bells then ten Sun Wukongs, never mind one, would have dared go nowhere near him. Hand them over at once."

"I really haven't seen them," Monkey replied with a smile.

"In that case I'll have to recite the Band–tightening Spell," said the Bodhisattva.

This scared Monkey, who could only plead, "Don't say it, don't say it. The bells are here." This was indeed a case of

Who could untie the bells from neck of the giant hound?

To find that out ask the one who first fastened them on.

The Bodhisattva then placed the bells round the giant hound's neck, and flew up to her high throne. Watch as the

Four–stalked lotus flowers blazed with fire;

Her whole body was thickly clad in cloth of gold.

We will say no more of how the Great Merciful One returned to the Southern Ocean.

The Great Sage Sun Wukong then tidied up his clothing and charged into the Horndog Gave swinging his iron cudgel and killing to his heart's content. He wiped all the demons out till he reached the inner quarters of the palace and asked the Golden Queen to go back to her

country. She prostrated herself to him for a long time.

Monkey told her all about how the Bodhisattva had subdued the demon and why she had been separated from her husband. Then he gathered some soft grasses that he twisted together into a long straw dragon.

"Sit on this, ma'am," he said, "and shut your eyes. Don't be afraid. I'm taking you back to court to see your master." The queen followed his instructions carefully while he used his magic power. There was a sound of the wind whistling in her ears.

An hour later he brought her into the city. Bringing his cloud down he said, "Open your eyes, ma'am." When the queen opened her eyes and looked she recognized the phoenix buildings and dragon towers. She was very happy, and getting off the straw dragon she climbed the steps of the throne hall. When the king saw her he came straight down from his dragon throne to take the queen by her jade hand.

He was just going to tell her how much he had missed her when he suddenly collapsed, shouting: "My hand hurts, my hand hurts."

"Look at that mug," Pig said, roaring with laughter, "he's out of luck. No joy for him. The moment he meets her again he gets stung."

"Idiot," said Monkey, "would you dare grab her?"

"What if I did?" Pig asked.

"The queen's covered with poisonous spikes," Monkey replied, "and she has poison on her hands. In the three years she was with the Evil Star Matcher in Mount Unicorn the monster never had her. If he had, his whole body would have been in agony. Even touching her with his hand made his hand ache."

"Then what is to be done about it?" the officials asked. While all the officials were wondering what to do in the outer palace and the consorts and concubines in the inner palace were full of terror, the Jade and the Silver Queen helped their king to his feet.

Amid – the general alarm a voice was heard in the sky shouting, "Great Sage, I'm here." Brother Monkey looked up, and this is what was to be seen:

The cry of a crane soaring through the heavens,

Then flying straight down to the palace of the king.

Chapter 71

996

Journey to the West

Beams of auspicious light shone about;

Clouds of holy vapors drifted all around.

Mists came from the cloak of coconut that covered his body:

Rare were the straw sandals on which he trod.

The fly–whisk in his hand was made of dragon whiskers,

And silken tassels hung around his waist.

He joined human destinies together throughout heaven and earth As he roamed free and easy all over the world.

He was the Purple Clouds Immortal of the Daluo Heaven,

Come down to earth today to lift an enchantment.

Monkey went over to him to greet him with, "Where are you going, Zhang Boduan of the Ziyang sect?"

The True Man of Ziyang came to the front of the hall, bowed and replied, "Great Sage, the humble immortal Zhang Boduan greets you."

"Where have you come from?" Monkey replied.

"Three years ago I passed this way when going to a Buddha assembly," the True Man said. "When I saw that the King of Purpuria was suffering the agony of being parted from his wife I was worried that the demon would defile the queen. That would have been an affront to morality and made it hard for the queen to be reunited with the king later on. So I turned an old coconut cloak into a new dress of many colours and gave it to the demon king. He made the queen wear it as her wedding dress. As soon as she put it on poisonous barbs grew all over her body. They were the coconut cloak. Now that you have been successful, Great Sage, I've come to lift the spell."

"In that case," said Monkey, "thank you for coming so far. Please

remove the barbs at once." The True Man stepped forward, pointed at the queen, and removed the coconut cloak. The queen's body was once more as it had originally been.

The True Man shook the cloak, put it over his shoulders, and said to Monkey, "Please forgive me if I leave now, Great Sage."

"Don't go yet," said Monkey. "Wait till the king has thanked you."

"I won't trouble him," said the True Man with a smile, then raised his hands together in salute, rose up into the sky and went. The king, queen and the officials high and low were so astonished that they all bowed to the sky.

Chapter 71

997

Journey to the West

When the bowing was over the king ordered that the Eastern hall of the palace be thrown open so that they could give thanks to the four monks. The king led all his officials to go down on their knees and kowtow to them, and husband and wife were reunited. In the middle of the celebratory banquet Monkey said, "Master, bring out that declaration of war."

The venerable elder produced it from his sleeve and handed it to Monkey, who passed it in turn to the king.

"This was a letter that the demons sent his lieutenant to deliver," Monkey said. "He was the officer I killed and brought here as a trophy. Then I turned myself into the officer and went back to the cave to report. That was how I saw Her Majesty and stole the golden bells. He almost caught me, but I did another change, stole them again, got them out and fought him. It was lucky for him that the Bodhisattva Guanyin came to collect him and tell me why you and Her Majesty were parted."

He told the whole story from beginning to end in great detail. Everyone in the country——whether ruler or ministers, whether within the palace or outside——expressed admiration and gratitude.

"In the first place," said the Tang Priest, "it was because of Your Majesty's own good fortune, and in the second place it was thanks to my disciple's efforts. We are deeply obliged to you for this sumptuous

banquet today, and now we must take our leave of you. Please do not delay us poor monks on our pilgrimage to the West."

When the king realized that his efforts to keep them there would be of no avail he inspected and returned the passport and arranged a great procession of royal coaches. The Tang Priest was invited to sit in his own dragon carriage, while the king, his queens and his consorts themselves all pushed it along as they saw them on their way then bade them farewell. Indeed:

He was fated to have his melancholy washed clean away:

The mind finds peace of itself when thought and worrying cease.

If you do not know what of good or ill lay in store for them on the way ahead listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 72

The Seven Emotions Confuse the Basic in Gossamer Cave

At Filth—Cleansing Spring Pig Forgets Himself

The story tells how Sanzang took his leave of the king of Purpuria, got everything ready, saddled the horse and headed Westwards. They crossed many a mountain and river. Before they realized it autumn and winter were over and spring's brightness and charm were back. Master and disciples were enjoying the scenery as their way led them across the greenery when they suddenly noticed a building amid trees. Sanzang dismounted and stood beside the main track.

"Master," Brother Monkey asked, "the road is easy and there is no evil about, so why have you stopped?"

"You aren't at all understanding, brother," Pig said. "The master is feeling sleepy after being in the saddle for so long. You ought to let him come down and have a rest."

"It's not that," Sanzang said. "I can see a house over there. I was thinking of going there myself to beg for some food."

"What a thing for the master to say," said Monkey with a smile. "If you want some food I'll go and beg some for you. As the saying goes, 'Your teacher for a day is your father for the rest of your life.' It would be outrageous for me, your disciple, to sit here idly and let my master go begging."

"There's no need to say that," Sanzang replied. "Usually you three have to cross enormous distances as far as the eye can see to beg for our food. Today there's a house so close it's in shouting distance, so let me beg this time."

"But, Master, you wouldn't know what to do," said Pig. "As the saying goes, when three people go travelling it's the youngest who does the rough jobs. You're the senior one and we're all only disciples. As the old book says, 'When there is a job to be done the disciple does it.' Let me go."

"Disciples," said Sanzang, "the weather is good today. It's not at all like the times when you all have to go far away in wind and rain. Let me go to this house. Whether I get any food or not I shall soon be back and we shall be on our way."

Friar Sand, who was standing beside them, smiled and said, "Stop arguing so much, brother. As the master has made his mind up you shouldn't disobey him. If you upset him he won't eat any of the food you are able to beg."

Pig accepted this suggestion and brought out the begging bowl and a change of hat and cassock for the master, who went straight to the farm building to look at it. It really was a fine place. He could see: A high – rising stone bridge,

Ancient trees growing close together.

Where the stone bridge rose high

A babbling brook joined a long stream;

Amid close – growing ancient trees

Hidden birds sang sweetly on the distant hill.

Across the bridge were several thatched houses

As pure and elegant as an immortal's hermitage.

There was also a thatched hut

So pure and white it would put a Taoist temple to shame.

Chapter 72

999

Journey to the West

Before the hut could be seen four beauties

All busily embroidering phoenix designs.

As there were no males but only these four girls to be seen the reverend gentleman did not dare go inside, but slipped back under the tall trees and stood stock still. He could see that each of the girls Were rock – hard in their ladylike propriety,

And happy as the spring in their orchid natures.

Red glows set off their tender cheeks;

Crimson make – up was spread on their lips.

Their moth brows were as fine as a crescent moon,

While their clouds of hair were piled up like cicada wings.

Had any of them stood among the flowers

Wandering bees would have taken them for blossoms.

He stood there for an hour. The silence was complete, unbroken by dog or cock. "If I'm not even capable of begging us a meal my disciples will laugh at me," he thought. "If the master can't beg a meal, what hope do his disciples have of ever getting to see the Buddha?"

He did not know what to do, but it seemed wrong to stay there any longer, so he went back towards the bridge, only to notice a pavilion inside the compound of thatched cottages. In the pavilion three more girls were juggling a ball with their feet. Look at them. They were different from the other four: Their turquoise sleeves are waving

And their embroidered skirts are swaying.

The waving turquoise sleeves

Cover their delicate jade bamboo – shoots of fingers,

The swaying embroidered skirts

Half show their tiny golden lotus feet.

Chapter 72

1000

Journey to the West

Perfect are their faces and bodies,

Endless the movements of their slippered heels.

As they grab for the head they vary in height;

They pass the ball around most smoothly.

One turns around and kicks an "over – the – wall flower,"

Then does a backward somersault called "crossing the sea."

After lightly taking a pass like a lump of clay

A single spear is hard pressed by a pair of sticks.

A shining pearl is put on the Buddha's head

And held between the tips of their fingers.

Skillfully they hold the ball as a narrow brick,

Twisting their feet in the sleeping fish position.

Their backs held level, they squat with bended knee;

Turning their necks they kick their heels in the air.

They can make benches fly around;

Very stylish are the capes upon their shoulders.

Their trouser – legs are bound with tapes to let them move,

While their necklaces swing as they sway.

They kick the ball like the Yellow River flowing backwards.

Or goldfish purchased on the beach.

When you mistake one of them for the leader

Another one turns to carry the ball away.

They all hold their calves so trimly in the air,

Pointing their toes to catch the ball.

They raise their heels to spin straw sandals,

Planting them upside—down and picking them up in a turn.

Chapter 72

1001

Journey to the West

As they step back their shoulder—capes spread out

Fastened only with a hook.

The peddler's basket comes down long and low,

Then they grab for the goal.

At the really magnificent footwork.

All the beauties shout with admiration.

The silken clothes of all are soaked in sweat;

Feeling tired and relaxed they ended their game.

The description could go on and on. There is another poem that tells more: Kicking the ball in the April weather,

Beauties blown along by the magical wind.

Sweat stained their powdered faces like dew on a flower;

The dust on their moth eyebrows was mist hiding willows.

Their turquoise sleeves hanging low covered jade fingers;

Trailing embroidered skirts showed golden lotus feet.

After kicking the ball many times they were charmingly tired;

Their hair was disheveled and their topknots askew.

After watching for a long time Sanzang could only go to the bridge and call loudly, "Bodhisattvas, fate brings me here as a poor monk to beg for the gift of some food." As soon as the women heard him they cheerfully put aside their needlework and balls to come out smiling and giggling through the gates to greet him.

"Reverend sir," they said, "we're sorry we didn't welcome you sooner. As you have come to our poor farm we couldn't possibly feed you on the path. Please come inside and sit down."

When Sanzang heard this he thought, "Splendid, this is splendid. The West really is Buddha's land. If even these womenfolk are so diligent about feeding monks the men are bound to be pious followers of the Buddha."

Chapter 72

1002

Journey to the West

Sanzang stepped forward to greet the women and followed them into the thatched cottages. As he passed the pavilion and looked he saw that on the other side of it there were no buildings. All that could be seen were: Towering mountain – tops,

Distant ranges of the earth.

The towering mountain – tops touch the clouds;

The distant ranges of the earth lead to peaks in the ocean.

From the stone bridge by the gates

One looks on a stream that bends nine times;

The peach and plum trees in the orchard

Vie in abundance of blossom.

Creepers and vines hang from three or four trees;

The fragrance of orchids is spread by thousands of flowers.

From afar this retreat rivals Penglai's fairyland;

Seen from close to the mountain beats Tai and Hua.

This is truly a retreat for demon immortals,

An isolated house with no neighbors around.

One woman came forward to push the stone gates open and invite the Tang Priest to come in and sit down. All he could do was go inside. When he looked up he saw that the tables and seats were all of stone, and the atmosphere was oppressively cold. This alarmed the venerable elder, who thought, "This is a thoroughly sinister place. I'm sure it's evil."

"Please sit down, venerable elder," the women all said with simpering smiles. He had no choice but to sit down. A little later he found himself shuddering.

"What monastery are you from, reverend sir?" the women asked. "For what purpose are you collecting alms?

Are you repairing roads and bridges, founding monasteries, worshipping at pagodas, or having Buddha statues made and sutras printed? Won't you show us your donation book?"

"I am not a monk collecting donations," the venerable elder replied.

"If you're not here to ask for charity then why are you here?" the women asked. "We have been sent by Great Tang in the East to the Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures," Sanzang replied.

Chapter 72

1003

Journey to the West

"As our stomachs were empty when we happened to be passing this distinguished place I have come to beg a vegetarian meal from you in your kindness. After that we poor monks will be on our way again."

"Splendid, splendid," the women all said. "As the saying goes, monks from afar most love to read the scriptures. Sisters! We must treat them well. Let's give them some vegetarian food as quickly as we can."

While three of the women kept him company, talking about such matters as primary and secondary causation, the other four went into the kitchen, where they tucked up their clothes, rolled up their

sleeves, fanned the fire and scrubbed the cooking pots. Do you know what it was they prepared? They were frying in human fat, and what they cooked was human flesh, stewed into black paste as if it were wheat gluten, and human brain cut out to fry like pieces of beancurd.

Then they placed the two dishes on a stone table and said to Sanzang, "Do eat. We were too rushed to prepare anything good, so please make do with this. It'll stave off the pangs of hunger. There will be some more dishes to follow."

As soon as Sanzang used his nose and smelled the stench of flesh he would not eat, but bowed with his hands together be; re his chest and said, "Bodhisattvas, I have been a vegetarian since birth."

"But this is vegetarian food, reverend sir," the women all replied with smiles.

"Amitabha Buddha!" exclaimed Sanzang. "If as a monk I ate vegetarian food like that I would never have any hope of seeing the Buddha or fetching the surras."

"Reverend sir," the women said, "as a monk you shouldn't be so choosy about what you're given."

"I never could be," Sanzang said, "I never could be. I am under the orders of the Great Tang emperor to harm not even the tiniest life, to save all I see suffering, to put all the food—grain I am given into my mouth with my fingers, and to cover my body with the threads of silk that come my way. I would never dare pick and choose among my benefactors' gifts."

"Even if you're not picking and choosing," the women replied with smiles, "you do seem to have come here to complain. Please eat some of the food and don't mind if it's a little coarse and flavorless."

"It's not that I don't want to eat it," Sanzang said, "it's that I'm afraid I'd be breaking my vows. I hope that you Bodhisattvas will remember that setting living beings free is better than keeping them with you and let me go on my way."

As Sanzang struggled to get out the women blocked the gateway and refused to let him go. "Business bringing itself to our door!" they all said. "You've no more chance of getting away from here than of covering up a fart with your hands. Where do you think you're going?"

They were all quite skilled in the martial arts and quick movers too,

and after they had grabbed Sanzang they dragged him like a sheep and threw him to the ground. Then they all held him down, tied him up, and suspended him from the rafters. There is a special name for the way they hung him up there: The Immortal Shows the Way. One hand was strung up by a rope so that it pointed forward. The other hand was fastened to his waist by another rope that was also holding him aloft, and his legs were both held up by a third rope behind him. The three ropes had him suspended from a beam with his back on top and his belly pointing down.

Chapter 72

1004

Journey to the West

As Sanzang endured the agony and held back his tears he thought with bitter regret, "How evil my destiny is. I thought I was coming to beg for a vegetarian meal from good people. I never imagined I'd be falling into the fiery pit. Disciples! Rescue me as soon as you can if I am ever to see you again. If you don't get here within four hours I shall be dead."

Despite his misery Sanzang kept a careful eye on the women. When they had him tied up securely and hanging there they started to remove their clothes. This alarmed the venerable elder, who thought, "They must be taking their clothes off because they are going to beat me. Perhaps they are going to eat me too." The women only unbuttoned their gauze blouses, exposing their stomachs. Then each of them produced a silken rope about as thick as a duck egg from her navel. These they made move like bursting jade or flying silver as they fastened the gates of the farm.

We leave them and go back to Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand, who were all still waiting by the main road. While the other two were pasturing the horse and looking after the baggage Monkey was amusing himself by leaping from tree to tree and climbing around the branches as he picked leaves and looked for fruit. Suddenly he turned round and saw a sheet of light.

This so alarmed him that he jumped out of the tree with a shout of, "This is terrible! Terrible! The master's luck is out." He pointed as he continued, "Look at the farm. What do you think?" When Pig and Friar Sand both looked they saw a sheet of something like snow but brighter and like silver but shinier.

"That's done it," said Pig, "that's done it. The master's run into evil spirits. We'd better go and rescue him straight away."

"Stop yelling, brother," said Monkey. "Neither of you can see just what's there. Wait while I go and take a look."

"Do be careful, brother," said Friar Sand.

"I can cope," Monkey replied.

The splendid Great Sage tightened his tigerskin kilt, pulled out his gold—banded cudgel and took a few strides forward to see that the silken ropes had formed something like a web with thousands of strands. When he felt it with his hands it was somewhat soft and sticky. Not knowing what it was, Monkey raised his cudgel and said, "Never mind thousands of strands. This cudgel could break through tens of thousands of them."

He was just about to strike when he stopped to think, "If they were hard I could certainly smash them, but then soft ones would only be knocked flat, and if I alarm the demons and get caught myself that would be a disaster. I'd better make some enquiries before I do any hitting."

Who do you think he asked? He made a spell with his hands, said the words of it and sent for an old local god, who ran round and round in his shrine just as if turning a mill. "Old man," his wife asked, "what are you rushing round and round for? You must be having a fit."

"You don't understand," the local god replied. "There's a Great Sage Equaling Heaven here. I didn't go to meet him. But he's sending for me."

"Go and see him then," his wife replied, "and that'll be that. Why charge round and round in here?"

Chapter 72

1005

Journey to the West

"But if I go and see him that cudgel of his hits very hard," the local deity said. "He doesn't care what you're like— —he just hits you."

"He won't possibly hit you when he sees how old you are," his wife

replied.

"He's been cadging free drinks all his life," the local god said, "and he really loves hitting old people."

After talking for a while with his wife the local god had no choice but to go outside and kneel shivering and shaking by the roadside, calling out, "Great Sage, the local deity kowtows to you."

"Get up," Brother Monkey replied, "and stop pretending to be so keen. I'm not going to hit you. I'm just passing through. Tell me where this is."

"Which way have you come, Great Sage?" the local deity asked.

"I've come from the East and I'm heading West," said Monkey.

"Which mountain have you reached on your journey from the East?" the local deity asked.

"That ridge there," Monkey replied. "Our baggage and the horse are there, aren't they?"

"That is Gossamer Ridge," the local deity replied. "Under the ridge there's a cave called Gossamer Cave where seven evil spirits live."

"Male or female ones?" Monkey asked.

"She – devils," the local deity replied.

"How powerful is their magic?" Monkey asked.

"I'm much too weak and insignificant to know that," the local god replied. "All I can tell you is that a mile due South of here there is a natural hot spring called the Filth – cleansing Spring," the local god said, "where the Seven Fairies from on high used to bathe. When the seven evil spirits settled here and took over the Filth – cleansing Spring the good spirits didn't try to fight them for it. They let the spirits have it for nothing. I reckon that if even good spirits from Heaven don't dare offend them the evil spirits must have tremendous powers."

"What have they taken the spring over for?" Monkey asked.

"Ever since taking the bathing pool over the monsters have been coming to bathe there three times a day," the local god replied. "It's already after eleven. They'll be along at noon."

"Go back now, local god," Monkey said when he heard all this, "and wait while I capture them." The old local god kowtowed to him and went back to his shrine all of a tremble.

The Great Sage then gave a solo display of his magical powers, shaking himself, turning into a fly, and landing on the tip of a blade of grass to wait beside the path. A little later he heard a rustling, hissing sound like that of silkworms eating leaves or an ocean tide coming in. In the time it takes to drink half a cup of tea the silken ropes had all gone, and the farm looked just the same as it had before. Then there was a creaking noise as the wicker gate opened and the seven women came out laughing and talking noisily. Monkey watched carefully from where he was hiding and saw them talking and laughing as they held each other by the Chapter 72

hand and walked shoulder to shoulder across the bridge. They were real beauties: Compare them with jade and they were more fragrant;

They were like flowers but able to talk.

Their willowy brows were like distant hills;

Sandalwood – scented mouths were bursting cherries.

Hair ornaments were of jade;

Golden lotus feet darted out under crimson skirts.

They were like the moon goddess come down to earth,

Immortal girls descending to the world.

"No wonder the master wanted to come begging for food," thought Monkey with a laugh, "with all these lovelies here. If these seven beauties have captured him he won't be enough for a single meal for them. They couldn't make him last a couple of days. And if they take it in turns to have their way with him they'll kill him straight off. I'd better go and listen to what they're plotting."

The splendid Great Sage flew over with a high – pitched buzz and landed on the topknot of the woman who was walking in front. When she was over the bridge the women behind her caught up with her

and called out,

"Sister, let's have a bath before we steam the fat monk and eat him up."

"These monsters aren't at all economical," Monkey smiled to himself. "They'd save a lot of firewood if they boiled him. Why steam him instead?" The women walked South, picking flowers and throwing grass at each other, and were soon at the bathing pool, where a very magnificent wall and gateway appeared, with fragrant flowers, among them a bed of orchids, growing all around. One of the women behind him stepped forward and with a whistling sound pushed the double gates open, revealing the pond of naturally hot water inside. As for this water,

When heaven and earth were first separated

There were ten suns in the sky

Till Yi, the fine archer,

Shot nine of the sun – crows down to the earth,

Leaving only one golden crow star,

The true fire of the sun.

Chapter 72

1007

Journey to the West

The nine hot springs in heaven and earth

Are the other nine crows transformed.

These nine hot springs are

Cool Fragrance Spring,

Mountain – companions Spring

Warm Spring,

Donghe Spring,

Mount Huang Spring,

Xiao'an Spring,

Guangfen Spring,

Hot Water Spring,

And this Filth – cleansing Spring.

There is a poem about it that goes:

The same vital force runs in all four seasons;

Spring continues throughout the autumn.

The scalding water bubbles like a cauldron;

The snow – white waves are boiling hot.

If the waters are spread they help the crops to grow;

Left where they are they wash worldly dust away.

Little bubbles spread out like pearls,

Rolling ones rise like pieces of jade.

It is rich and smooth although not wine,

Clear, calm and naturally warm.

The whole place thrives on its air of good omen:

It brings good fortune and the natural truth.

When the beauties wash their flesh is smooth as ice;

As dirt is soaked away their jade – like bodies are made new.

The bathing pool was about fifty feet across, a hundred feet long and four feet deep. The water was pure and translucent, and from the

bottom of it came up bubbles like rolling pearls or floating jade. In the four sides of the pool there were six or seven pipes through which the water flowed out, keeping warm even when it reached fields up to a mile away. Beside the pool was a three–roomed pavilion, next to the back wall of which stood an eight–legged bench. At each end of the pavilion was a clothes stand painted in coloured lacquers. All this secretly delighted Monkey, who flew straight to one of the stands and landed on it.

When the women saw how clear and warm the water was they wanted to bathe in it, so they all took their clothes off and hung them on the stands before going into the pool together. This is what Monkey saw: They undid the buttons on their clothes,

Loosened the knots in their gauzy sashes.

Silvery white were their creamy breasts,

Snowy their bodies that looked like jade.

Their arms and elbows were cool as ice,

And scented shoulders more lovely than if powdered.

Soft and supple the skin on their stomachs,

Glistening and clean their backs.

Their knees and wrists were rounded and soft;

Only three inches long were their golden lotus feet.

And as for what lay in between,

They showed a glimpse of the cave of pleasure.

The women all jumped into the water and enjoyed themselves as they frolicked in the waves. "If I wanted to hit them," Monkey thought, "I'd only need to stir the water with my cudgel. It would be like pouring boiling water on a nest of mice: I could kill the lot of them. What a pity. If I hit them I'd kill them, but it wouldn't do my reputation any good. As they say, a real man doesn't fight women. It'd be hopeless if a man like me killed these girls. If I'm not going to hit them I'll have to make things difficult for them so that they can't move." The splendid Great Sage made a spell with his hands, said the words of it, shook himself and turned into a hungry eagle.

Chapter 72

1009

Journey to the West

His feathers were like frost or snow,

His eyes like bright stars.

When evil foxes saw him their souls were scared out of them;

And crafty hares were struck with terror.

His steely claws were sharp as spear–points;

His air was both majestic and ferocious.

He used his talons to seize his food,

And was ready to catch his flying prey himself.

He could fly high and low across the chilly sky,

Swooping through clouds and on his quarry at will.

With a whoosh of his wings he flew towards them, stretched his sharp talons to seize all seven sets of clothes that were hung on the stands and flew straight back to the ridge with them. Here he reverted to his own form to see Pig and Friar Sand.

Just look at the idiot as he comes up to Brother Monkey and says with a grin, "The master must have been taken to a pawnbroker's."

"How can you tell?" asked Friar Sand.

"Can't you see all those clothes our brother's grabbed?" Pig replied.

"These are the evil spirits' clothes," said Monkey, putting them down.

"How on earth did you get so many?" Pig asked.

"There are seven outfits," said Monkey.

"How did you strip them so easily, and strip them naked at that?" Pig asked.

"I didn't have to strip them," said Monkey. "This place is called

Gossamer Ridge, and the farm is called Gossamer Gave. The seven she – devils who live there captured the master, hung him up in their cave and all went off to bathe in the Filth – cleansing Spring. It's a natural hot spring. Their plan was to have a bath then steam the master and eat him. I went there with them and watched them undress and get into the water. I wanted to hit them, but I was worried it would contaminate my cudgel and ruin my reputation so I didn't. I just turned myself into a hungry eagle and grabbed their clothes in my talons. Now they're all squatting in the water, too embarrassed to come out. Let's rescue the master and be on our way as quickly as we can."

"Brother," grinned Pig, "you always leave something undone. You could see that they were evil spirits, so why didn't you kill them first then rescue the master? Even if they're too embarrassed to come out now they'll Chapter 72

certainly come out after nightfall. They're bound to have enough old clothes at home to be able to put on an outfit each and come after us. Even if they don't come after us they live here permanently and we'll have to come this way back after we've fetched the scriptures. As the saying goes, it's better to get into debt on a journey than to get into a fight. When they stop us and make a row they'll really have it in for us."

"So what do you suggest?" Monkey asked.

"If you ask me we should kill the demons then rescue the master," said Pig. "That's what's called cutting down weeds and digging them out by the roots."

"I'm not going to hit them," Monkey replied. "If you want them hit go and do it yourself."

Pig then summoned up his spirits and in high delight rushed straight there, his rake held aloft. As he suddenly pushed the gates open and looked inside he saw the seven women squatting in the water and wildly cursing the eagle.

"Feathery beast," they were saying, "cat – headed monster. What the hell can we do now you've carried our clothes off?"

Pig could not help laughing as he said to them, "Bodhisattvas, carry on with your bath. Do you mind if I join you?"

"You monk, you're disgrace," the devils retorted angrily as they saw him. "We're laywomen and you're a man of religion. As the ancient book has it, 'From the age of seven boys and girls do not share the same mat.' You mustn't possibly bathe in the same pool as us."

"But the weather's so scorching hot I've got no choice," said Pig. "You'll have to make the best of it and let me take a wash. What do you have to show off all that book–learning about sharing mats for?"

With further argument the idiot dropped his rake, stripped off his cotton tunic and jumped in with a splash, to the fury of the demons who all rushed at him to hit him. Little did they realize how expert Pig was in the water. Once in the pool he shook himself and turned into a catfish spirit. The demons then tried to grab him but even when they caught him they could not get a firm grip. If they grabbed to the East he suddenly shot Westwards, and if they tried to grab him to the West he went East. The funny thing was that he kept wriggling around their crotches. The water was about chest–high, and after swimming around at the surface and then at the bottom of the pool for a while he had covered all of it and was panting and exhausted.

Only then did Pig jump out, turn back into himself, put his tunic back on, pick up his rake and shout, "Who am I then? You thought I was a catfish spirit!"

At the sight of him the demons all trembled with fright and said to Pig, "When you came here first you were a monk, then you turned into a catfish in the water and we couldn't catch you. Now you've dressed like that.

Where have you come from? You must tell us your name."

"Bloody demons, you really don't know who I am," said Pig. "I'm a disciple of the Venerable Tang Priest, who has been sent from Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures. My title is Marshal Tian Peng and I'm called Zhu Wuneng, or Pig. You've hung my master up in your cave and you're planning to steam him and eat him.

Is my master just a meal for you to cook? Stretch your heads out at once. I'm going to smash you all with my rake and wipe the lot of you out."

Chapter 72

At this the demons were scared out of their wits. They fell to their knees in the water, kowtowed to him and said, "Please be kind, reverend sir. We were blind and we captured your master by mistake. Although we did hang him up we haven't tortured him. We beg you in your compassion to spare our lives. We'll gladly give you some money for the journey and send your master on his way to the Western Heaven."

"Cut that talk out," said Pig, waving his hands. "It's quite right what they say: 'Once you've been tricked by a confectioner you won't believe sweet – talkers again.' I'm going to hit you with my rake, then we can all go our separate ways."

The idiot was thoroughly rough and crude and wanted to show off his powers. He was unmoved by their fragrant feminine beauty. Raising his rake he charged them, lashing out wildly without caring what he was doing. The demons acted desperately. Forgetting about their modesty they cared only about saving their lives as covering their private parts with their hands they jumped out of the water and ran into the pavilion.

Standing there they used magic to make thick silken ropes come out of their navels, filling the sky with a huge silken canopy under which Pig was caught. When the idiot looked up he could not see the sun in the heavens.

He tried to run outside, but he could not lift his feet, which were tangled in silken ropes that covered the ground. When he tried to move his feet he tripped and staggered. He tried going left, but his head crashed to the ground, then tried going right and came a cropper. So he turned round as quickly as he could and kissed the dirt, got himself back on his feet, and collapsed head first once more. Goodness only knows how many times he stumbled and fell till his whole body was numb, his feet sore, his head aching and his eyes blurred.

He could no longer even crawl, but lay groaning on the floor. Then the demons tied him up. They neither beat him up nor wounded him, but sprang outside to rush back to their cave, leaving the silken canopy to blot out the daylight.

When they reached the stone bridge they stopped and said the words

of a spell. In an instant the silk canopy had been put away, and they all rushed stark naked into the cave, covering their private parts with their hands as they ran giggling past the Tang Priest.

Once inside their bedrooms carved out of the rock they put on old clothes and went straight to the back door of the cave, where they stood and called, "Where are you, children?"

Now each she–devil had a child, not one that she had borne, but an adopted child who had taken her as a mother. They were called Bee, Hornet, Cockroach, Spanish–fly, Grasshopper, Wax–insect and Dragonfly, for such they were. The evil spirits had spread their nets across the sky, caught these seven insects and been on the point of eating them. But as the old saying goes, "Birds have bird language and beasts have beast language."

The insects had pleaded for their lives and volunteered to take the spirits as their own mothers. Ever since then they had gathered blossoms in the spring and summer flowers for the evil spirits, and as soon as they heard the shouts they appeared and asked, "What orders do you have for us, mothers?"

"Sons," the demons replied, "this morning we made a mistake and provoked the monk from Tang. His disciples trapped us in the pool and disgraced us. We were almost killed. You must do your utmost. Go outside and drive them away. When you've beaten them come to your uncle's to meet us." The she–devils then fled for their lives and went to the home of their teacher's senior disciple, where their wicked tongues were to give rise to more disasters, but of that we shall not now speak. Watch while the insects rub their fists in their hands and go out to confront their enemies.

Chapter 72

1012

Journey to the West

Pig, meanwhile, whose head was spinning after falling over so often, looked up and suddenly saw that the silken canopy and ropes had all disappeared. Groping around he picked himself up, and despite his pain he made his way back the way he had come. As soon as he saw Monkey he grabbed him and said, "Brother, is my head bulging? Is my face all blue?"

"What happened to you?" Monkey asked.

"Those damned creatures caught me under a silken net and tripped me up goodness knows how many times with silk ropes," Pig replied. "My waist was twisted, my back felt broken and I couldn't move an inch. Then the silk canopy and the ropes all disappeared, so I could escape and come back."

"Forget about it," said Friar Sand when he saw him, "forget about it. You asked for trouble. I'm sure the demons have all gone back to the cave to harm the master. We must go and rescue him straight away."

When Monkey heard this he set out at once as fast as he could and rushed back to the farm while Pig led the horse. Here the seven little devils could be seen standing on the bridge, blocking their way and saying, "Not so fast, not so fast. We're here."

"What a joke!" said Pig when he saw them. "They're just a bunch of kids. They're only two foot five or six, well under three foot, and they can only weigh eight or nine pounds, not even ten."

"Who are you?" he shouted.

"We're the sons of the seven immortal ladies," the little devils replied. "You've insulted our mothers, and now you've got the effrontery to attack us, you ignorant fools. Stay where you are, and watch out." The splendid monsters then launched a wild onslaught on Pig, who was in a flaming temper after falling over so often.

Seeing how tiny the insects were he lifted his rake to strike furious blows at them.

When the little devils saw how ferocious the idiot was they all reverted to their original forms, flew into the air and shouted, "Change!" In an instant each of them became ten, each ten became a hundred, each hundred became a thousand, and each thousand became ten thousand. Every one became a countless number. This is what could be seen:

The sky was full of wax – flies,

Dragonflies danced all over the land.

Bees and hornets went for the head,

Cockroaches jobbed at the eyes.

Spanish – flies bit before and behind,

While grasshoppers stung above and below.

His face was black and crawling with insects:

Even devils or deities would have been scared by their speed.

Chapter 72

1013

Journey to the West

"Brother," said Pig in alarm, "you can say what you like about it being easy to fetch the scriptures, but on this road to the West even the insects give you a bad time."

"Don't be afraid, brother," said Monkey. "Go for them."

"But they're flying into my head and my face and all over my body," replied Pig. "They're at least ten layers deep and all stinging me. How can I go for them?"

"No problem," said Monkey, "no problem. I know a trick."

"Whatever it is, brother," said Friar Sand, "use it right now. His shaven head has swollen up with those bites in no time at all." The splendid Great Sage pulled out a handful of hairs, chewed them into little bits and blew them out, telling them to turn to golden eagles, falcons, hawks, white eagles, vultures, ospreys and sparrowhawks. "Brother," said Pig, "what's that jargon about goldens and all that?"

"Something you don't know about," Monkey replied. "Golden eagles, falcons, hawks, white eagles, vultures, ospreys and sparrowhawks are the seven birds of prey that my hairs turned into. That's because the she–devils'

children are insects." Because the birds were so good at catching insects they got one every time they opened their beaks, grabbed at them with their claws or struck them with their wings. They wiped all the insects out in an instant, leaving no trace of them in the sky. The ground was piled over a foot deep with their bodies.

Only then could the three brothers charge across the bridge and into the cave, where they found their master hanging groaning and sobbing in mid–air. "Master," said Pig, going up to him, "are you hanging around here for fun? I don't know how many times I've had to

fall over on your account."

"Untie the master before we take this conversation any further," said Friar Sand. Brother Monkey then snapped the ropes and set the master free, asking, "Where did the evil spirits go?"

"All seven of them ran stark naked through to the back," the Tang Priest replied. "They were calling for their sons."

"After them, brothers!" said Monkey. "Follow me!"

The three of them, each holding his weapon, went searching in the back garden, but no sign of them could be found. They looked for them without success under all the peach and plum trees. "They've gone," said Pig,

"they've gone."

"We can stop looking for them," said Friar Sand. "I'm going to help the master away from here." The three brothers then went back to the front, where they asked the Tang Priest to mount up. "You two help the master along the way," said Pig. "I'm going to smash these buildings to the ground with my rake. Then they'll have nowhere to live when they come back."

"Smashing the place would be too much effort," said Monkey. "The best way to cut off their roots would be to find some firewood." The splendid idiot then gathered some dead pine, broken – off bamboo, dried – out willow and withered creepers that he set alight. The roaring blaze destroyed everything. Only then did master and disciples feel easy enough to be on their way.

If you don't know what of good or evil the demons were to do to them, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 72

1014

Journey to the West

Chapter 73

The Emotions Bear a Grudge and Inflict Disaster

The Heart's Master Smashes the Light When He Meets the Demons

The story tells how the Great Sage Sun supported the Tang Priest as they hurried along the main road to the West together with Pig and Friar Sand. Within a few hours they were in sight of a compound with many tall towers and imposing buildings. "Disciple," said Sanzang, reining in his horse, "what's that place?" Monkey looked up to gaze at it and this is what he saw.

Tall towers girdled by hills,

Streams winding round pavilions.

Dense grew the wood in front of the gates,

And outside the buildings the scent of flowers hung heavy.

White egrets perched among the willows,

Like flawless jades half hidden in a mist;

Golden orioles sang in the peach – trees,

Flashes of gold in the fiery blossom.

Wild deer in couples

Trod lost to the world across cushions of greenery;

Pairs of mountain birds

Sang as they flew among the red tree – tops.

It was like the Tiantai Cave of Liu and Ruan,

And rivaled the home of the immortals in fairyland.

"Master," Brother Monkey reported, "that's no princely palace or rich man's mansion. It looks like a Taoist temple or Buddhist monastery. We'll know for sure when we get there." On hearing this Sanzang whipped on his horse, and when master and disciples reached the gates to look there was a stone tablet set over the gateway on which was written YELLOW FLOWER TEMPLE. Sanzang dismounted.

"Yellow Flower Temple means it's a Taoist place," said Pig, "so it's all right for us to go in and see them.

Although we wear different clothes we cultivate our conduct the same way."

"You're right," said Friar Sand. "We can go in and have a look round, and at the same time the horse can have a feed. If it looks suitable we can arrange a meal for the master."

The master accepted their suggestions and the four of them went inside. A couplet was pasted up on either side of the inner gates:

Palace of immortals: yellow shoots and white snow.

Home of men who can fly: rare and wonderful flowers.

"So the Taoist here refines drugs, plays with a furnace and totes a crucible," said Monkey with a grin.

"Watch your words," said Sanzang, giving him a pinch, "watch your words. We don't know them and they are no relations of ours. This is only a passing encounter. Never mind what they are like." Before he had finished saying these words he went in through the inner gate, where he found the doors of the main hall shut tight and a Taoist master sitting under a covered walkway making elixir pills. Just look at how he was dressed: On his head a bright red hat all set with gold,

On his body a jet – black Taoist robe.

On his feet a pair of deep green cloud – treading shoes,

Round his waist a brilliant yellow Lu Dongbin sash.

His face was round like a golden melon,

His eyes like bright stars.

His nose was as big and as high as a Muslim's,

And his lips turned back like a Tartar's.

His heart, set on the Way, was hidden thunder;

He was a true immortal, subduer of tigers and dragons.

As soon as he saw him Sanzang shouted at the top of his voice, "My

respectful greetings, venerable Taoist master." The Taoist looked up with a start and was so alarmed by what he saw that he dropped the elixir on which he was working.

Then he neatened his hair – pins and clothes, came down the steps and greeted Sanzang: "Venerable sir, excuse me for failing to meet you. Please come inside and sit down." The venerable elder happily went up into the Chapter 73

main hall. On pushing the doors open he saw the statues of the Three Pure Ones and an altar on which stood incense burners and incense, so he planted some joss – sticks in the burner and performed a triple set of obeisances to the Pure Ones before bowing to the Taoist master. He then went to the guest seats, where he sat down with his disciples. Immortal boys were told to bring tea at once, whereupon two boys went inside to fetch the tea – tray, wash the teacups, wipe the teaspoons and prepare some refreshments to eat with it. Their rushing about soon disturbed the pilgrims' enemies.

Now the seven devils from Gossamer Cave had been fellow – students of the Taoist master here, and it was here that they had hurried after putting on their old clothes and calling for their sons. They were making themselves new clothes at the back of the temple when they noticed the boys preparing the tea and asked,

"What visitors have arrived, boys? What are you in such a rush for?"

"Four Buddhist monks have just turned up," the boys replied, "and the master has told us to prepare tea for them."

"Is one of the monks pale and fat?" the she – devils asked.

"Yes."

"Does one of them have a long snout and big ears?" they asked again.

"Yes."

"Then take the tea in as quickly as you can," the she – devils said, "and tip your master a wink to come in here.

We've got something urgent to say to him."

The boys took five cups of tea out to the Taoist master, who tucked back his sleeves and passed a cup with both hands first to Sanzang and then to Pig, Friar Sand and Brother Monkey. After the tea had been drunk the cups were collected and the boys gave their master a look, at which he bowed and said, "Please sit down, gentlemen. Boys, put the tray down and keep them company. I have to go out. I'll be back." Sanzang and his disciples went out of the hall to look around, guided by one boy.

When the Taoist master went back to the abbot's lodgings the seven women all fell to their knees and said,

"Brother, brother, please listen to what we have to say."

The Taoist master helped them to their feet and said, "When you came here this morning you wanted to tell me something, but because of the elixir pills I was making I couldn't see any women. That's why I had to refuse. I have visitors out there now, so you can tell me later."

"We have to report, elder brother," the she－devils said, "that it's because the strangers are here that we're talking to you. If the strangers go away there'll be no point in telling you."

"What are you talking about, sisters?" the Taoist master said. "Why do you have to talk to me just now, when the strangers are here? Have you gone off your heads? I'm a man who lives in peace and quiet cultivating immortality, but even if I were a layman with wife and children and family responsibilities I'd wait till my visitor had left before attending to them. How can you be so ill－behaved and disgrace me? Now let me go."

All the she－devils grabbed him and said, "Please don't lose your temper, elder brother. Tell us where the visitors come from." The Taoist master pulled a long face and ignored them. "When the boys came in for the Chapter 73

tea just now they told us the visitors are four Buddhist monks," the she－devils said.

"They're monks," said the Taoist master angrily, "what of it?"

"Does one of the four monks have a pale, fat face," the she－devils

asked, "and one of them a long snout and big ears? Did you ask them where they're from?"

"Yes," the Taoist said, "there are two like that among them. How did you know? I suppose you've seen them somewhere."

"You don't know the terrible things that have happened, brother," the devils said. "That monk was sent by the Tang court to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. He came to our cave this morning begging for food. We captured him because we'd heard of this Tang Priest."

"Why did you capture him?" the Taoist asked.

"We've long known that the Tang Priest has a pure body because he has cultivated his conduct for ten successive incarnations," the devils replied. "Anyone who eats a piece of his flesh will live for ever. That's why we captured him. Later the monk with a long snout and big ears kept us in the Filth–cleansing Spring.

First he stole our clothes and then he used his magical powers to insist on bathing with us. He jumped into the water and turned himself into a catfish. From the way he kept swimming around between our thighs he obviously had very improper ideas. He was thoroughly disgraceful. Then he jumped out of the water and turned back into himself. As we weren't going to let him have his way he tried to kill us all with his nine–pronged rake. If we hadn't known a thing or two he'd have murdered the lot of us. We fled in fear and trembling and sent your nephews into battle. We don't know whether they are alive or dead. We have come here to fling ourselves on your mercy and beg you to avenge your fellow–students from long ago."

On hearing this the Taoist was furious, as could be seen from his changed expression. "What outrageous monks!" he exclaimed. "What hooligans! Don't you worry: I'm going to sort them out."

"If you're going to fight them," said the she–devils in gratitude, "you must let us help you."

"There'll be no need to fight," said the Taoist, "no need. As the saying goes, you have to lower yourself to fight someone. Come with me."

The women went with him into his room, where he carried a ladder behind the bed, climbed up to the rafters and brought down a little leather box. It was eight inches high, a foot long, four inches wide and locked with a tiny brass lock. From his sleeve he produced a square

handkerchief of goose – yellow silk, to the fringes of which a tiny key was tied. Unlocking the box he brought out a packet containing a drug. This drug was: A thousand pounds of droppings

From all kinds of mountain birds,

Boiled in a copper cauldron,

Reduced on an even fire,

Till the thousand pounds were only a spoonful

Chapter 73

1018

Journey to the West

That was then reduced to a third.

This was fried even longer,

Refined and smoked once again.

To make the poisonous drug,

More precious than treasures or jewels.

Were you to try out its flavor,

One taste would send yon to Hell.

"Sisters," said the Taoist master, "any mortal who eats one grain of this treasure of mine will be dead when it reaches his stomach. Only three grains would be enough to kill a god or an immortal. As these monks may have mastered something of the Way they'll need three grains. Fetch my balance." One of the women brought a balance at once.

"Weigh out twelve grains," he said, "and divide that into four portions." Then he took twelve red jujubes, pinched holes in them, stuffed a grain of the drug in each, and put them into four teacups. These were then placed with a fifth cup containing two black jujubes on a tray.

"Let me question them," he said. "If they aren't from Tang that'll be the end of it; but if they are I'll ask for fresh tea and you can give this tea to the boys to bring in. Once they drink it they'll all die and you'll be

avenged. That'll cheer you up." The seven women were beside themselves with gratitude.

The Taoist changed into another robe and walked out again with a great show of feigned courtesy. He urged the Tang Priest and the others to sit down in the guest seats again. "Please excuse me, venerable sir," the Taoist said. "The reason why I neglected you just now was because I was at the back telling my disciples to choose some greens and radishes to cook as a vegetarian meal for you."

"We Buddhist monks came empty－handed," said Sanzang. "We could not possibly trouble you for a meal."

"We are all men of religion," replied the Taoist master with a smile. "Whenever we go to a monastery or temple we are entitled to three pints of rice, so why talk of being empty－handed? May I ask you, reverend sir, what monastery you are from, and why you are here?"

"I have been sent by His Majesty the Great Tang emperor to fetch the scriptures from the Great Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven," Sanzang replied. "As we were passing your Taoist temple we came in to pay our respects."

At this news the Taoist's face was full of animation, as he said, "It was only because I did not realize you were so faithful to the most virtuous Buddha that I failed to come out a long way to meet you. Please forgive me.

Please forgive me." Then he told the boys to bring fresh tea at once and get a meal ready as soon as possible, at which the boys went straight inside to fetch the tea.

"Here's some good tea that's all ready," the women called to them. "Take this in." The boys did indeed take the five cups in, and the Taoist master hurriedly passed a cup of red jujube tea to the Tang Priest. As Pig was Chapter 73

so big the Taoist took him for the senior disciple, and he thought Friar Sand was the next senior. Thinking that Monkey was the junior one the Taoist only handed him his cup fourth. By the time the sharp－eyed Brother Monkey took his cup he had already noticed that there were two black jujubes in the cup left on the tray.

"Let's change cups, sir," he said. "To be honest with you," the Taoist replied with a smile, "as a poor Taoist living out here in the wilds I am rather short of tea and food at the moment. I was looking for fruit out at the back just now and I could only find these twelve red jujubes to put into four cups of tea to offer you. As I had to take something with you I made another cup with these inferior jujubes to keep you company. This is just a gesture of respect."

"What nonsense," said Monkey with a smile. "As the ancients said, 'You are never poor if you are at home; but poverty on a journey is killing.' You're at home here, so why all this talk about being poor? It's wandering monks like us who are really poor. I'll swap with you. I insist."

"Wukong," said Sanzang when he heard this, "this immortal gentleman is being very hospitable. You have yours. There is no need for a swap." Monkey had no choice. Taking the cup with his left hand he covered it with his right and watched them.

Pig, however, who apart from feeling hungry and thirsty had an enormous appetite at the best of times, picked the three red jujubes out of the cup as soon as he saw them and swallowed them noisily. The master ate his too, as did Friar Sand. In that very instant Pig's face changed color, tears started pouring from Friar Sand's eyes and the Tang Priest began to foam at the mouth. Unable to sit upright, all three of them fainted and fell to the floor.

Realizing that they had been poisoned, the Great Sage raised his teacup in his hands and threw it at the Taoist master's face. The Taoist stopped it with his sleeve and it shattered noisily as it fell to the floor. "You lout, monk," said the Taoist in fury, "how dare you smash my cup?"

"Animal," said Monkey abusively, "just look what you've done to those three! What have I ever done to you for you to give my people poisoned tea?"

"Beast," said the Taoist master, "you asked for it. Don't you realize that?"

"We've only just come here and talked about things like where we should sit and where we're from," said Monkey. "We didn't talk big. How can you say we asked for this trouble?"

"Did you beg for food in Gossamer Cave?" the Taoist master asked. "Did you bathe in the Filth–cleansing Spring?"

"There were seven she – devils in the Filth – cleansing Spring," Monkey replied. "From what you're saying you must be in cahoots with them. I'm sure you're an evil spirit yourself. Stay where you are and take this!" The splendid Great Sage felt in his ear for his gold – banded cudgel, waved it to make it as thick as a rice – bowl, and struck at the Taoist master's face. The Taoist rapidly turned and dodged the blow, then produced a fine sword with which he fought back.

Their cursing and fighting had by now disturbed the seven she – devils inside, who all rushed out shouting,

"Spare yourself the trouble, elder brother. Let us catch him." At the sight of them Monkey became angrier than ever. Whirling his iron cudgel around with both hands he dropped his guard and tumbled in among them, lashing out wildly. The seven women then undid their clothes, revealing their white stomachs, and from their navels they produced by magic thick silken ropes that came reeling out in such abundance that they formed a canopy under which Brother Monkey was confined.

Chapter 73

1020

Journey to the West

Seeing that things were going badly Monkey got up, said the words of a spell, did a somersault, smashed through the canopy and escaped. Then he stood gloomily in mid – air, controlling his temper and watching as the flashing silken ropes crisscrossed like the warp and weft of cloth on the loom. Within a moment the Yellow Flower Temple's towers and halls were all completely concealed. "Terrible," said Monkey, "they're terrible. I've never been up against anything like that before. No wonder Pig fell over so often. What am I to do now? The master and my brothers have been poisoned. This gang of devils are all hand in glove, and I know nothing about their background. I'll go back and question that local god."

The splendid Great Sage brought his cloud down to land, made a spell with his fingers, said the sacred syllable *Om,* and forced the old local god to come to him again. The old deity knelt beside the path, trembling with fear and kowtowing as he said, "Great Sage, you went to rescue your master. Why are you back again?"

"I rescued him this morning," Monkey replied, "and a little way ahead from there we reached a Yellow Flower Temple. When I went in with

the master to look around, the head Taoist of the temple greeted us, and in the middle of our conversation he knocked out my master and the other two with poisoned tea. Luckily I didn't drink any, but when I was going to hit him with my cudgel he started talking about begging for food at Gossamer Cave and bathing at the Filth–cleansing Spring, so I knew he was a monster. No sooner had he raised his hand to fight back than the seven women came out and set off their silken ropes. It was a good thing I had the know–how to get away. I reckon that as you're a god who lives round here you're bound to know their background. What sort of evil spirit are they? Tell me the truth if you don't want to be hit."

"It's less than ten years since those evil spirits came here," said the local deity, kowtowing. "When I was making an inspection three years ago I saw what they really are: seven spider spirits. The silken ropes that come out of them are spiders' webs."

The news thoroughly delighted Monkey, who said, "From what you tell me they're no problem. Very well then. You can go back while I use magic to subdue him." The local god kowtowed and went.

Monkey then went to the outside of the Yellow Flower Temple, pulled seventy hairs out of his tail, blew on them with magic breath and shouted, "Change!" The hairs turned into seventy little Monkeys. He then blew a magic breath on his gold–banded cudgel, called "Change!" and turned it into seventy two–pronged forks, one of which he gave to each of the little Monkeys. Monkey himself used one of the forks to twist the silken ropes as he stood outside, then they all attacked together to the rhythm of a tune, tearing the ropes to pieces, each of them tearing off over ten pounds of rope. They dragged seven spiders out from inside. Each was about the size of a wicker basket. All of them held their hands and feet together and had ropes round their necks.

"Spare us, spare us," they said. The seventy little Monkeys then pressed the seven spiders to the ground, refusing to let them go.

"Don't hit them," said Monkey. "All we want is to make them give my master and my brothers back."

"Elder Brother," shrieked the demons at the tops of their voices, "give the Tang Priest back and save our lives."

The Taoist master rushed outside saying, "Sisters, I'm going to eat the Tang Priest. I can't save you."

This infuriated Brother Monkey. "If you won't give my master back just watch what happens to your sisters."

The splendid Great Sage waved his fork, turned it back into an iron cudgel that he lifted with both hands and smashed the seven spider spirits to pulp. Then he shook his tail a couple of times, put the hairs back on it and charged inside alone, swinging his cudgel to fight the Taoist master.

Chapter 73

1021

Journey to the West

When the Taoist master saw Monkey kill his seven fellow–students it was more than he could bear. Goaded to fury, he raised his sword to fight back. In this battle each of them was seething with anger and giving full play to his divine powers. It was a fine battle:

The evil spirit swung a fine sword;

The Great Sage raised his gold–banded cudgel.

Both were fighting for Sanzang of the Tang,

On whose account the seven women had been killed.

Now they were fighting with all–round skill,

Showing their mighty powers with their weapons.

Powerful was the Great Sage's aura,

And rough the courage of the evil immortal.

Their vigorous moves were as rich as brocade,

And both hands moved as fast as a windlass.

Noisily clanged the sword and cudgel,

And ominously pale were the floating clouds.

Few were the words they spoke

As they used their cunning,

Moving to and fro like brush – strokes in a painting.

The wind and dust they raised scared wolves and tigers;

The stars disappeared as heaven and earth went dark.

When the Taoist master had fought fifty or sixty rounds with the Great Sage he felt his hand weakening and his sinews getting slack, so he undid his belt and with a loud flapping noise took off his black robe. "Well, my lad," said the Great Sage with a laugh, "if you can't beat me you still won't be able to when you strip off."

Once the Taoist master had stripped off his clothes he raised both hands to reveal under his ribs a thousand eyes flashing golden light. It was terrible:

Dense yellow smoke,

Brilliant golden light.

The dense yellow smoke

Gushed out as clouds from under his ribs;

The brilliant golden light

Came from a thousand eyes like fire.

To left and right they seemed like golden pails;

To East and West they resembled bells of bronze.

Thus an evil immortal used his magic power,

A Taoist master showed divine ability,

Dazzling the eyes, blotting out sun, moon and sky,

Blanketing people with acrid vapors.

Was caught in the golden light and yellow smoke.

Monkey started lashing out desperately with his hands and feet, but could only spin around inside the golden light, unable to take a step either forwards or backwards. It was as if he were turning round and round in a bucket. It was hopeless. He was unbearably hot. In his anxiety he leapt into the air, smashing against the golden light, and crashing head first to the ground. His head ached where he had hit it, and felt anxiously to find that the top of his scalp was tender.

"What lousy luck," he though, "what lousy luck. This head's useless today. Usually swords and axes can't hurt it, so why has golden light bruised it now? After a while it's bound to go septic, and even if it does get better I might have tetanus." He was still feeling unbearably hot. "I can't move forward or back," he thought, working out a plan, "or to left or right, and I can't smash my way through by going up. Whatever shall I do? I'll damn well have to get out by going down."

The splendid Great Sage said the words of a spell, shook himself, and turned into one of those scaly diggers called pangolins. Indeed:

Four sets of iron claws

Dug through the mountain, smashing rocks like powder.

The scales covering his body

Chapter 73

1023

Journey to the West

Carved through ridges and crags like slicing scallions.

His eyes were as bright

As two gleaming stars;

His mouth was sharper

Than a steel drill or brazen auger.

He was the scaly mountain – borer used in medicine,

The creature known as the pangolin.

Watch him as he burrows into the ground with his head, not coming out again till he has covered over six miles. The golden light could only enclose about three miles. When he emerged and turned back into himself he was exhausted. His muscles ached, his whole body was in pain, and he could not help weeping. Suddenly he burst out with, "Master,

Since leaving the mountain and joining the faith

I've worked very hard on our way to the West.

The waves of the ocean are nothing to fear,

But in this dry gulch I've come out second best."

Just as the Handsome Monkey King was feeling miserable the sound of sobs could suddenly be heard from the other side of the mountain. Leaning forward and drying his tears he turned to look. A woman appeared, dressed in deep mourning and sobbing at every step as she came from the other side of the mountain. She was holding a dish of cold rice gruel in her left hand and several pieces of yellow paper money for burning to the dead in her right. Monkey sighed and nodded as he said to himself, "This is a case of Weeping eyes meeting weeping eyes,

One broken heart coming across another.

I wonder what this woman is crying about. I'll ask her." Before long the woman was coming along the path towards him.

"Lady Bodhisattva," asked Brother Monkey with a bow, "who are you weeping for?"

Through her tears the woman replied, "My husband was murdered by the master of the Yellow Flower Temple with poisoned tea because he got into a quarrel with him over the purchase of some bamboo poles.

I'm going to burn this paper money as a mark of my love for him."

This made Monkey's tears flow. The sight made the woman say angrily, "You ignorant fool. I'm grieving over my husband, but what

business do you have to be weeping and looking so miserable? Are you mocking me?"

"Please don't be angry, Bodhisattva," said Monkey with a bow. "I'm Sun Wukong the Novice, the senior disciple of Tang Sanzang, the younger brother of the Great Tang Emperor in the East. When we passed the Yellow Flower Temple on our way to the Western Heaven we stopped to rest, but the Taoist master there is some kind of evil spirit who's the sworn brother of seven spider spirits. When the spider spirits wanted to kill my master in Gossamer Cave I and my brother disciples Pig and Friar Sand managed to save him. The spider spirits fled to the Taoist's place and told him a pack of lies about us bullying them, so the Taoist knocked out my master and brothers. The three of them and the horse are now prisoners in his temple. I was the only one who didn't drink the tea. I smashed the cup and he attacked me. Because of the noise the seven spider spirits rushed outside to give out their silken ropes and catch me in the web they wove. I only got away by magic.

After I'd found out who they really were I used my power of giving myself extra bodies to tear the silken ropes to pieces, drag the demons out and beat them to death. The Taoist master wanted revenge, so he went for me with his sword. When we'd gone sixty rounds he fled beaten, took off his clothes, and used the thousand eyes he has under his ribs to give off countless beams of golden light. I was caught under them, unable to move forwards or backwards, so I turned into a pangolin and burrowed my way out underground. It was when I was feeling thoroughly depressed that I heard you weeping, which was why I asked you those questions. When I saw that you had paper money to give your husband I felt wretched and miserable because I've got nothing for my master when he dies. Making fun of you was the last thing on my mind!"

Putting down the gruel and the paper money the woman returned Brother Monkey's bow and said, "Please forgive me. I didn't realize that you were a sufferer too. From what you've just said you don't know who that Taoist is. He's really the Demon King Hundred-eye, who's also known as the Many-eyed Monster. You must have tremendous magical powers to have escaped from the golden light and fought so long, but you couldn't get near him. I'll tell you about a sage you can send for who would be able to smash the golden light and defeat the Taoist."

Monkey's immediate response was to chant a "na-a-aw" of respect and say, "If you know the sage's background, lady Bodhisattva, may I

trouble you to tell me about it? If there is such a sage I'll fetch him to rescue my master and avenge your husband."

"I'll tell you," the woman said, "and you can fetch the sage, who will subdue the Taoist, but that will only bring revenge. I'm afraid the sage won't be able to rescue your master."

"Why not?" Monkey asked. "His poison is truly lethal," the woman replied. "When people are laid low by it the very marrow of their bones rots within three days. I'm afraid that by the time you've been to see the sage and come back again you'll be too late to save him."

"I know how to travel," Monkey replied. "However far it is I'll only take half a day."

"If you can travel then listen to this," the woman said. "About three hundred miles from here there's a mountain called Mount Purple Clouds, and in the mountain there's a Thousand Flower Cave where there lives a sage called Vairambha who will be able to defeat that demon."

"Where's the mountain?" Monkey asked. "Which direction should I take?"

"It's due South of here," the woman replied, pointing; and by the time Brother Monkey looked back at her she had disappeared.

Monkey quickly did a kowtow and said, "Which Bodhisattva was that? After all that burrowing you disciple was feeling too stupid to recognize you. I beg you to tell me your name so that I can thank you." At this there came a shout from mid–air, "Great Sage, it's me." Monkey quickly looked up to see that it was the Old Lady of Mount Li. Catching up with her in the sky he thanked her with the words, "Where have you come from to give me these instructions?"

"On my way back from Dragon Flower Assembly I noticed that your master was in trouble," the Old Lady replied. "It was to save his life that I pretended to be a woman in mourning for her husband. Hurry up and fetch the sage. But don't tell her I sent you: she is rather difficult."

Thanking her, Monkey took his leave and set off straight away on his somersault cloud. Once at Mount Purple Clouds he brought his cloud down and saw the Thousand Flower Cave. Outside the cave: Blue pines masked the splendid view,

Turquoise cypresses surrounded the immortal's home.

Green willows were packed close along the mountain paths,

Rare flowers filled the watercourses.

Orchids grew all around stone buildings,

And scented blooms gave color to the crags.

Flowing water linked ravines with green,

While clouds enclosed the emptiness of trees.

Noisily sang wild birds.

Slowly strolled the deer,

Elegant grew the bamboo,

And all the red plums were open.

Rooks perched in ancient woods,

While spring birds chirped in the tree of heaven.

Summer wheat filled spreading acres,

And autumn millet grew all over the land.

No leaf fell in all four seasons.

Chapter 73

1026

Journey to the West

And flowers bloomed throughout the year.

Auspicious rosy glows joined with the Milky Way,

And clouds of good omen were linked with the Great Emptiness.

The Great Sage was delighted as he went inside, seeing boundless beauty at every stage. He went straight on, but found it deserted and completely silent. Not even a chicken or a dog could be heard. "I think that this sage must be out." Monkey thought. When he had gone a mile or two further on he saw a Taoist nun sitting on a couch. This is what she looked like:

She wore a five – flowered hat of brocade,

And a robe of golden silk.

Her cloud – treading shoes were patterned with phoenixes

And round her waist was a sash with double tassels.

Her face looked as old as autumn after a frost,

But her voice was as charming as swallows in the spring.

Long had she mastered the Dharma of Three Vehicles,

And she was ever mindful of the Four Truths.

She knew true achievement, that emptiness is empty,

And through her training had acquired great freedom.

She was the Buddha of the Thousand Flower Cave,

The illustrious Vairambha of great fame.

Monkey went straight up to her without stopping and said, "Greetings, Bodhisattva Vairambha."

The Bodhisattva then came down from her couch, put her hands together to return his greeting and said,

"Great Sage, it was remiss of me not to come out to greet you. Where have you come from?"

"How do you know that I'm the Great Sage?" Monkey asked.

"When you made havoc in Heaven the other year," Vairambha replied, "your picture was circulated everywhere. That's why everyone can recognize you."

Chapter 73

"How true it is," Monkey said, "that

While good deeds stay at home

Bad deeds are known far and wide.

Take my conversion to Buddhism, for example. You didn't know about that."

"Congratulations," said Vairambha. "When did that happen?"

"Not long ago my life was spared to escort my master the Tang Priest on his journey to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures," Monkey replied. "My master has been laid low with poisoned tea by the Taoist of the Yellow Flower Temple. When I was fighting with him he caught me in his golden light, and I had to use magic to escape. I have come here to pay you my respects, Bodhisattva, and ask your help because I've heard that you are able to destroy his golden light."

"Who told you that?" the Bodhisattva asked. "I have not left here since the Ullambana assembly over three hundred years ago. I've lived in complete secrecy and nobody has heard of me, so how is it that you know of me?"

"I'm an underground devil," Monkey replied, "and I can make my own enquiries anywhere at all."

"Never mind," Vairambha said, "never mind. I shouldn't really go, but as you have honoured me with a visit, Great Sage, and as the great cause of fetching the scriptures must not be allowed to fail I'll go with you."

Monkey thanked her and said, "It's very ignorant of me to hurry you along in this way. I wonder what weapon you use."

"I have an embroidery needle that will put an end to that damned creature," said the Bodhisattva.

This was too much for Monkey. "Old Lady, you've been wasting my time," he said. "Had I known it was an embroidery needle I wouldn't have had to trouble you. I could have provided a hundredweight of them."

"Your embroidery needles are all made of iron, steel or gold," the Bodhisattva replied. "They're no use. My treasure isn't iron and isn't steel and isn't gold. It was tempered by my son in the sun."

"Who is he?" asked Monkey. "He is the Star Lord of the Mane," Vairambha replied.

This came as a shock to Monkey, who gazed at the golden light then turned to Vairambha and said, "The Yellow Flower Temple is where that golden light is coming from." Vairambha then took from the lapel of her gown an embroidery needle about the thickness of an eyebrow hair and half an inch long. Holding it between her fingers she threw it into the air. A few moments later there was a loud noise and the golden light was shattered.

"That's wonderful, Bodhisattva, wonderful!" exclaimed a delighted Monkey. "Let's find your needle now."

Chapter 73

"Isn't this it here?" asked Vairambha, who was holding it in her hand. Brother Monkey brought his cloud down to land with hers and went into the temple, where he found the Taoist with his eyes shut, unable to move. "Stop playing blind, damned demon," he said abusively, taking his cudgel from his ear ready to hit the Taoist with.

"Don't hit him, Great Sage," said Vairambha. "Go and see your master."

On going straight to the reception room at the back Monkey found the three of them bringing up mucus and spittle where they lay on the floor. "What am I to do?" wept Monkey. "What am I to do?"

"Don't grieve, Great Sage," said Vairambha. "As I've come out today I think I might as well accumulate some merit by giving you three of these pills that are an antidote to the poison." Monkey turned round to bow down and beg her for them, whereupon she produced a torn paper packet from her sleeve containing three red pills that she handed to Monkey, telling him to put one in each of their mouths. This he did, forcing their teeth apart. A few moments later they all started vomiting as the drug reached their stomachs, bringing up the poison and coming back to life. Pig was the first to scramble to his feet.

"I feel suffocated," he said. Sanzang and Friar Sand both came round too, saying that they felt very dizzy.

"Your tea was poisoned," Brother Monkey explained. "It was the Bodhisattva Vairambha who saved you.

Hurry up and bow to her in thanks." Sanzang bowed to her to show his gratitude as he straightened up his clothes.

"Brother," said Pig, "where's that Taoist? I've got some questions to ask him about why he tried to murder me." Monkey then told him all about the spider spirits.

"If spider spirits are his sisters that damned creature must be an evil spirit too," said Pig with fury.

"He's standing outside the main hall pretending to be blind," said Monkey, pointing.

Pig grabbed his rake and was about to hit the Taoist with it when Vairambha stopped him and said, "Control your temper, Marshal Tian Peng. As the Great Sage knows, I have no servants in my cave. I am going to take him as my doorkeeper."

"We are deeply indebted to your great power," Monkey replied, "and we will of course obey. But we would like you to turn him back into his real self so that we can have a look at him."

"Easily done," said Vairambha, stepping forward and pointing at the Taoist, who collapsed into the dust and reverted to his real form of a giant centipede spirit seven feet long. Picking him up with her little finger Vairambha rode her auspicious cloud straight back to the Thousand Flower Cave. "That old lady's a real terror," said Pig, looking up. "How did she manage to subdue that evil creature?"

"When I asked her what weapon she had to smash the golden light with," Monkey replied, "she told me about a golden embroidery needle of hers that her son had tempered in the sun. When I asked her who her son was she told me he was the Star Lord of the Mane. As I remember, the Mane Star is a cock, so his mother must be a hen. Hens are very good at dealing with centipedes, which is why she could subdue him."

On hearing this Sanzang performed no end of kowtows. "Disciples," he ordered, "go and get things ready."

Friar Sand then went inside to find some rice and prepare a vegetarian meal, so that they could all eat their fill.

Then they led the horse up, shouldered the carrying – pole, and asked the master to set out. Monkey started a blaze in the kitchen that in an instant burnt the whole temple to ashes. He then set out on his way. Indeed: Chapter 73

1029

Journey to the West

The Tang Priest thanked Vairambha for saving his life;

The emotions were eliminated and the Many – eyed Monster removed.

As for what happened on the way ahead, listen to the explanations in the next installment.

Chapter 74

Li Changgeng Reports the Demons' Vicious Nature

The Novice Displays His Powers of Transformation

Emotions and desires are in origin all the same;

Both emotions and desires are completely natural.

Many a gentleman refines himself in the Buddhist faith;

When desire and emotions are forgotten, dhyana conies.

Don't be impatient; be firm of heart;

Be free of dust like the moon in the sky.

Make no mistake in your labors and your progress;

When your efforts are completed you will be an enlightened immortal.

The story tells how Sanzang and his disciples, having broken through the net of desires and escaped from the prison – house of the emotions, let the horse travel West. Before they had been going for very long the summer was over and the new coolness of early autumn was refreshing their bodies. What they saw was: Driving rains sweeping away the last of the heat,

Alarming the leaf of the parasol tree.

At evening glow – worms flew by the sedge path

While crickets sang beneath the moon.

Chapter 74

1030

Journey to the West

The golden mallows opened in the dew;

Red knotweed covered the sandbanks.

Rushes and willows were the first to lose their leaves

As cold cicadas sang in tune.

As Sanzang was travelling along a high mountain appeared in front of him. Its peak thrust up into the azure void, touching the stars and blocking out the sun. In his alarm the venerable elder said to Monkey, "Look at that mountain in front of us. It's very high. I don't know whether the path will take us across."

"What a thing to say, Master," said Monkey with a smile. "As the old saying goes, However high the mountain there will be a way across;

However deep the river there's always a ferryman.

There's no reason why we shouldn't get over it. Stop worrying and carry on." When Sanzang heard this his face broke out in smiles and he whipped his horse forward to climb straight up the high crag.

After a mile or two an old man appeared. His white hair was tangled and flying in the wind while his sparse whiskers were being blown about like silver threads. He wore a string of prayer – beads round his neck and held a dragon – headed walkingstick as he stood far away at the top of the slope shouting, "Venerable gentleman travelling West, stop your worthy steed. Rein in. There is a band of demons on this mountain who have eaten all the people in the continent of Jambu. Go no further!"

At this Sanzang turned pale with terror, and because the horse was not standing steadily and he himself was not well seated in the carved saddle he crashed to the ground and lay in the grass, moaning but

unable to move.

Monkey went over to help him to his feet with the words, "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid. I'm here."

"Did you hear the old man up on the crag telling us that there's a band of demons on this mountain who have eaten everyone in the continent of Jambu?" said Sanzang. "Who'll dare go to ask him what this is really all about?"

"Sit there while I go and ask him," Monkey replied.

"With your ugly face and coarse language I'm afraid you may shock him," said Sanzang, "so you won't get the truth from him."

"I'll make myself a bit better looking before questioning him," laughed Brother Monkey.

Chapter 74

1031

Journey to the West

"Do a change to show me," said Sanzang, and the splendid Great Sage made a spell with his fingers, shook himself, and turned into a very neat little monk, clear–eyed, fine–browed, round–headed and regular of features. He moved in a most refined way and said nothing vulgar when he opened his mouth.

Brushing his brocade tunic he stepped forward and said to the Tang Priest, "Master, have I changed for the better?"

"Yes," said the delighted Sanzang.

"Marvellous," said Pig, "but the rest of us look shabby by comparison. Even if I rolled around for two or three years on end I couldn't make myself look as elegant as that."

The splendid Great Sage left them behind as he went straight up to the old man, bowed to him and said,

"Greetings, venerable sir." Seeing how young and cultivated he looked, the old man returned his greeting and stroked his head in an offhand way.

"Little monk," the old man said with a smile, "where have you come

from?"

"We are from the Great Tang in the East," Monkey replied, "going to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. When we came here and heard you tell us that there are demons here my master was terrified. He sent me to ask you about them. What sort of evil spirits would dare go in for that sort of crime? I would trouble you, venerable sir, to tell me all the details so that I can put them in their place and send them on their way."

"You're much too young, little monk," said the old man with a smile, "to know what's good for you. Your remarks aren't helpful. Those evil spirits have tremendous magical powers. How can you have the nerve to talk of putting them in their place and sending them on their way?"

"From what you are saying," Monkey replied with a smile, "you seem to be trying to protect them. You must be a relation of theirs, or else a neighbour or a friend. Why else would you be promoting their prestige and boosting their morale, and refusing to pour out everything you know about their background?"

"You certainly know how to talk, monk," said the old man, nodding and smiling. "I suppose you must have learned some magic arts while travelling with your master. Perhaps you know how to drive away and capture goblins, or have exorcised people's houses for them. But you've never come up against a really vicious monster."

"What sort of vicious?" Monkey said.

"If those evil spirits send a letter to Vulture Mountain the five hundred arhats all come out to meet them," the old man said. "If they send a note to the Heavenly Palace the Ten Bright Shiners all turn out to pay their respects. The dragons of the Four Oceans were their friends and they often meet the immortals of the Eight Caves. The Ten Kings of the Underworld call them brothers; the local gods and city gods are good friends of theirs.

When the Great Sage heard this he could not help bursting into loud guffaws. "Stop talking," he said, grabbing hold of the old man, "stop talking. Even if that demon is friends with all those young whippersnappers, my juniors, that's nothing really remarkable. If he knew I was coming he'd clear off the same night."

"You're talking nonsense, little monk," the old man said. "How can any of those sages be juniors and young whippersnappers to you?"

"To be truthful with you," Monkey replied with a grin, "my people have lived for many generations in the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in the land of Aolai. My name is Sun Wukong. In the old days I used to be an evil spirit too and did some great things. Once I fell asleep after drinking too much at a feast with the other demons and dreamed that two men came to drag me off to the World of Darkness. I got so angry that I wounded the demon judges with my gold-banded cudgel. The kings of the Underworld were terrified and I practically turned the Senluo Palace upside-down. The judges in charge of the case were so scared that they fetched some paper for the Ten Kings to sign. They promised to treat me as their senior if I let them off a beating."

"Amitabha Buddha!" exclaimed the old man when he heard this. "If you talk big like that you won't be able to grow any older."

"I'm old enough, fellow," said Monkey.

"How old are you then?" the old man asked. "Guess," Monkey replied.

"Six or seven," the old man said. "I'm ten thousand times as old as that," laughed Monkey, "I'll show you my old face, then you'll believe me."

"How can you have another face?" the old man asked.

"This little monk has seventy-two faces," Monkey replied.

Not realizing that Monkey really had these powers the old man went on questioning him till Monkey rubbed his face and turned back into himself, with his protruding teeth, big mouth, red thighs and tigerskin kilt round his waist. As he stood there at the foot of the rocky scar, holding his gold-banded cudgel, he was the living image of a thunder god. The sight of him made the old man turn pale with terror and go so weak at the knees that he could not keep himself upright but collapsed to the ground. When he got to his feet again he lost his balance once more.

"Old man," said the Great Sage, going up to him, "don't get yourself so frightened over nothing. I may look evil but I'm good inside. Don't be

afraid! You were kind enough just now to tell us that there are demons here.

Could I trouble you to let me know how many of them there are? I'll thank you very much if you do." The old man trembled, unable to speak and acting as if deaf. He replied not a word.

Getting no answer from him, Monkey went back down the slope.

"So you are back, Wukong," Sanzang said. "What did you find out?"

"It's nothing," said Monkey with a smile, "nothing. Even if there are one or two evil spirits on the way to the Western Heaven, the people here only worry so much about them because they're such cowards. No problem!

I'm here!"

"Did you ask him what mountain this was and what cave," said Sanzang, "how many monsters there are, and which is the way to Thunder Monastery?"

"Please excuse me if I speak frankly, Master," put in Pig. "When it comes to transformations, trickery and deception, then four or five of us would be no match for Brother Monkey. But a whole parade of Monkeys couldn't touch me for honesty."

"That's right," said the Tang Priest, "that's right. You're honest."

"Goodness knows why," said Pig, "but he just rushed in without a second thought, asked a couple of questions, and came running back in an awful mess. I'm going to find out the truth."

"Do be careful, Wuneng," said the Tang Priest.

The splendid idiot put his rake in his belt, straightened up his tunic, and swaggered straight up the slope to call to the old man, "Respectful greetings, sir." The old man had finally managed to get back on his feet with the help of his stick after seeing that Monkey had gone, and was still shaking and about to depart when Pig suddenly appeared.

"Sir," he said, more shocked than ever, "whatever kind of nightmare am I in the middle of? The first monk was ugly enough, but at least he looked a little bit human. But this one's got a snout like a pestle, ears like rush fans, a face like iron plates, and a neck covered in bristles. It doesn't look at all human."

"You must be in a very bad mood to run me down like that, old man," laughed Pig. "Is that how you see me?

Ugly I may be, but if you can bear to look at me for a while you'll find I get quite handsome."

Only when the old man heard Pig using human speech did he address him by asking, "Where are you from?"

"I'm the Tang Priest's second disciple," Pig replied, "and my Buddhist names are Wuneng or Bajie. The one who came and asked you questions just now was Sun Wukong the Novice, the senior disciple. My master has sent me to pay my respects to you because he's angry with Sun Wukong for offending you and not finding out the truth. Could you please tell me, sir, what mountain this is, what caves there are on it, what demons live in them, and which is the main route West?"

"Are you honest?" the old man asked.

"I've never been false in all my life," Pig replied. "You mustn't talk a whole lot of fancy nonsense like the other monk just now," said the old man.

"I'm not like him," Pig replied.

Leaning on his stick, the old man said to Pig, "This is Lion Ridge, and it is 250 miles around. In it there is a Lion Cave where there are three demon chieftains."

"You're worrying over nothing, old man," said Pig, spitting. "Why go to all that trouble just to tell us about three demons?"

"Aren't you afraid?" the old man said.

"To tell you the truth," Pig replied, "my elder brother'll kill one with one swing of his cudgel, I'll kill another with one bash from my rake, and the other disciple will kill the third one with his demon–quelling staff. And with the three of them dead our master will be able to cross the ridge. No problem!"

"You don't know the whole story, monk," said the old man with a smile. "Those three demon chiefs have the most tremendous magic powers. As for the little demons under their command, there are five thousand on the Southern end of the ridge, five thousand on the Northern end, ten thousand on the road East, ten thousand on the road West, four or five thousand patrollers, and another ten thousand on the gates. Then there are any number who work in the kitchen and gather firewood. There must be 47,000 or 48,000 altogether. They all have names and carry passes, and all they do is eat people."

Chapter 74

1034

Journey to the West

On learning this the idiot ran back, shivering and shaking. As soon as he was near the Tang Priest he put down his rake and started shitting instead of reporting back. "What are you squatting there for instead of making your report?" shouted Monkey when he saw the idiot.

"Because I'm shit scared," Pig replied. "No time to talk now. The sooner we all run for our lives the better."

"Stupid fool," said Monkey. "I wasn't frightened when I questioned him, so why should you be in such a witless panic?"

"What is the situation?" Sanzang asked.

"The old man says that this is Lion Mountain," Pig replied, "and that there's Lion Cave in it. There are three chief demons there, and they have 48,000 little devils under them. All they do is eat people. So if we step on their mountain we'll just be serving ourselves up as a meal to them. Let's forget about it." On hearing this Sanzang shivered, his hairs standing on end.

"What are we to do, Wukong?" he asked.

"Don't worry, Master," said Monkey. "It can't be anything much. There are bound to be a few evil spirits here.

It's just that the people here are such cowards that they exaggerate about how many demons there are and how powerful they are. They get themselves into a funk. I can cope."

"You're talking nonsense, brother," said Pig. "I'm not like you. What I

found out was the truth. I wasn't making any of it up. The hills and valleys are all crawling with demons. How are we going to move ahead?"

"You're talking like an idiot," said Monkey with a grin. Don't scare yourself over nothing. Even if the hills and valleys were crawling with demons I'd only need half a night to wipe them all out with my cudgel."

"You're shameless," said Pig, "quite shameless. Stop talking so big. It would take seven or eight days just to call the roll. How could you wipe them all out?"

"Tell me how you'd do it," laughed Monkey.

"However you grabbed them, tied them up, or fixed them where they are with fixing magic you'd never be able to do it so fast," said Pig.

"I wouldn't need to grab them or tie them up," said Monkey. "I'll give my cudgel a tug at both ends, say

'Grow!,' and make it over four hundred feet long. Then I'll wave it, say 'Thicken!,' and make it eighty feet around. I'll roll it down the Southern slope and that'll kill five thousand of them. I'll roll it down the Northern slope and kill another five thousand. Then I'll roll it along the ridge from East to West, and even if there are forty or fifty thousand of them I'll squash them all to a bloody pulp."

"Brother," said Pig, "if you kill them that way, like rolling out dough for noodles, you could do it in four hours."

"Master," said Friar Sand with a laugh, "as my elder brother has such divine powers we've got nothing to fear.

Please mount up so that we can be on our way." Having heard them discussing Monkey's powers Sanzang could not but mount with an easy heart and be on his way.

As they traveled along the old man disappeared. "He must have been an evil spirit himself," said Friar Sand,

"deliberately coming to frighten us with cunning and intimidation."

Chapter 74

"Take it easy," said Monkey. "I'm going to take a look." The splendid Great Sage leapt up to a high peak but saw no trace of the old man when he looked around. Then he suddenly turned back to see a shimmering coloured glow in the sky, shot up on his cloud to look, and saw that it was the Great White Planet. Walking over and grabbing hold of him, Monkey kept addressing him by his personal name: "Li Changgeng! Li Changgeng! You rascal! If you had something to say you should have said it to my face. Why did you pretend to be an old man of the woods and make a fool of me?"

The planet hastened to pay him his respects and said, "Great Sage, I beg you to forgive me for being late in reporting to you. Those demon chiefs really have tremendous magical abilities and their powers are colossal.

With your skill in transformations and your cunning you may just be able to get over, but if you slight them it will be very hard."

"I'm very grateful," Monkey thanked him, "very grateful. If I really can't get across this ridge I hope that you'll go up to Heaven and put in a word with the Jade Emperor so he'll lend me some heavenly soldiers to help me."

"Yes, yes, yes," said the Great White Planet. "Just give the word and you can have a hundred thousand heavenly troops if you want them."

The Great Sage then took his leave of the planet and brought his cloud down to see Sanzang and say, "The old man we saw just now was actually the Great White Planet come to bring us a message."

"Disciple," said Sanzang, putting his hands together in front of his chest, "catch up with him quick and ask him where there's another path we could make a detour by."

"There's no other way round," Monkey replied. "This mountain is 250 miles across, and goodness knows how much longer it would be to go all the way around it. How ever could we?" At this Sanzang could not restrain himself from weeping.

"Disciple," he said, "if it's going to be as hard as this how are we going to worship the Buddha?"

"Don't cry," Monkey said, "don't cry. If you cry you're a louse. I'm sure he's exaggerating. All we have to do is be careful. As they say,

forewarned is forearmed. Dismount and sit here for now."

"What do you want to talk about now?" Pig asked.

"Nothing," replied Monkey. "You stay here and look after the master carefully while Friar Sand keeps a close eye on the baggage and the horse. I'm going up the ridge to scout around. I'll find out how many demons there are in the area, capture one, ask him all the details, and get him to write out a list with all of their names. I'll check out every single one of them, old or young, and tell them to shut the gates of the cave and not block our way. Then I can ask the master to cross the mountain peacefully and quietly. That'll show people my powers."

"Be careful," said Friar Sand, "do be careful!"

"No need to tell me," Brother Monkey replied with a smile. "On this trip I'd force the Eastern Ocean to make way for me, and I'd smash my way in even if it were a mountain of silver cased in iron."

The splendid Great Sage went whistling straight up to the peak by his somersault cloud. Holding on to the vines and creepers, he surveyed the mountain only to find it silent and deserted. "I was wrong," he said

involuntarily, "I was wrong. I shouldn't have let that old Great White Planet go. He was just trying to scare me. There aren't any evil spirits here. If there were they'd be out leaping around in the wind, thrusting with their spears and staves, or practicing their fighting skills. Why isn't there a single one?"

As he was wondering about this there was a ringing of a bell and a banging of clappers. He turned round at once to see a little devil boy with a banner on which was written BY ORDER over his shoulder, a bell at his waist and clappers in his hands that he was sounding. He was coming from the North and heading South. A close look revealed that he was about twelve feet tall.

"He must be a runner," thought Monkey, grinning to himself, "delivering messages and reports. I'll take a listen to what he's talking about." The splendid Great Sage made a spell with his hands, said the magic words, shook himself and turned into a fly who landed lightly on the devil's hat and tilted his head for a good listen.

This is what the little devil was saying to himself as he headed along the main road, sounding his clappers and ringing his bell: "All we mountain patrollers must be careful and be on our guard against Sun the Novice. He can even turn into a fly!" Monkey was quietly amazed to hear this. "That so – and – so must have seen me before. How else could he know my name and know that I can turn into a fly?" Now the little devil had not in fact seen him before. The demon chief had for some reason given him these instructions that he was reciting blindly. Monkey, who did not know this, thought that the devil must have seen him and was on the point of bringing the cudgel out to hit him with when he stopped.

"I remember Pig being told," he thought, "when he questioned the planet that there were three demon chieftains and 47,000 or 48,000 junior devils like this one. Even if there were tens of thousands more juniors like this it would be no problem. But I wonder how great the three leaders' powers are. I'll question him first.

There'll be time to deal with them later."

Splendid Great Sage! Do you know how he questioned the demon? He jumped off the devil's hat and landed on a tree top, letting the junior devil go several paces ahead. Then Monkey turned round and did a quick transformation into another junior devil, sounding clappers, ringing a bell and carrying a flag over his shoulder just like the real one. He was also dressed identically. The only difference was that he was a few inches taller.

He was muttering the same things as the other as he caught him up, shouting, "Hey, you walking ahead, wait for me."

Turning round, the junior devil asked, "Where have you come from?"

"You're a nice bloke," Monkey said with a smile, "not even recognizing one of your own people."

"You're not one of ours," said the demon.

"What do you mean?" Monkey asked. "Take a look and see if you can recognize me."

"I've never seen you before," the demon said. "I don't know you."

"It's not surprising you don't know me," said Monkey. "I work in the kitchens. We've rarely met."

"You don't," said the demon, shaking his head, "you don't. None of the brothers who do the cooking has got a pointy face like yours."

Chapter 74

1037

Journey to the West

"I must have made my face too pointy when I did the transformation," thought Monkey, so he rubbed it with his hands and said, "It isn't pointy." Indeed it was not.

"But it was pointy just now," the little devil said. "How did you stop it being pointy just by rubbing it? You're a very shady character. I don't have the faintest idea who you are. You're not one of us. I've never met you.

Very suspicious. Our kings run the household very strictly. The kitchen staff only work in the kitchen and the mountain patrols keep to patrolling the mountain. How could you possibly be a cook and a patroller?"

"There's something you don't know," said Monkey, improvising a clever answer. "I was promoted to patrolling because the kings saw how well I'd worked in the kitchens."

"Very well then," said the little devil. "We patrollers are divided into ten companies of forty each, which makes four hundred in all. We're all known by our ages, appearances, names and descriptions. Because Their Majesties want to keep the organization neat and roll – calls convenient they've given us all passes. Have you got one?" Monkey, who had seen what the devil looked like and heard what he had said, had been able to turn himself into the devil's double. But not having seen the devil's pass he was not carrying one himself. Instead of saying that he did not have one the splendid Great Sage claimed that he had.

"Of course I've got one," he said. "But it's a new one that's only just been issued to me. Show me yours."

Not realizing what Monkey was up to, the little devil lifted his clothes to reveal a gold – lacquered pass with a silken cord through it fastened next to his skin that he lifted out to show Monkey. Monkey saw that on the back of it were the words "Demon – suppresser," while on the front was handwritten "Junior Wind – piercer."

"Goes without saying," Brother Monkey thought, "all the ones in mountain patrols have 'Wind' at the end of their names. Put your clothes down now," he said, "and come over here while I show you my pass." With that he turned away, put a hand down to pull a little hair from the tip of his tail, rubbed it between his fingers, called "Change!" and turned it into another gold–lacquered pass on a green silken cord on which were handwritten the words "Senior Wind–piercer."

With his liking for taking things to extremes and his gift of finding the right thing to say, Monkey remarked,

"There's something you don't know. When Their Majesties promoted me to patrolling for doing so well in the kitchen they gave me a new pass as a Senior Patroller and put me in charge of you forty lads in this company."

At this the demon at once gave a "na–a–aw" of respect and said, "Sir, I didn't recognize you as you've only just been appointed. Please forgive me if anything I said offended you."

"I'm not angry with you," said Monkey, returning his courtesy. "There's just one thing. I want some money from you all to mark our first meeting: five ounces of silver each."

"Please be patient, sir," the little devil replied. "When I get back to the Southern end of the ridge to meet the rest of our company we'll all give it to your together."

"In that case I'm coming with you," said Monkey, and he followed behind as the demon led the way.

After a mile or two a writing–brush peak was seen. Why was it called a writing–brush peak? Because on the top of the mountain there was a pinnacle about forty or fifty feet high that looked just like a writing brush standing upright on a brush stand.

Chapter 74

1038

Journey to the West

Going up to it Monkey lifted his tail, jumped to the top of the pinnacle, sat down and called, "Come here, all of you."

The young Wind–piercers all bowed low beneath him and said,

"We're at your service, sir."

"Do you know why Their Majesties appointed me?" Monkey asked.

"No," they replied.

"Their Majesties want to eat the Tang Priest," said Monkey, "but they're worried about Sun the Novice's tremendous magic powers. They've heard that he can do transformations and are worried that he might turn himself into a young Wind–piercer and come along the path here to find out what's going on. That's why they're made me Senior Wind–piercer to check up on you and find out if there are any impostors among you."

"We're all genuine, sir," the junior Wind–piercers all replied at once.

"If you're all genuine do you know what powers His Senior Majesty has?" Monkey asked.

"Yes," one of the young Wind–piercers said.

"In that case," said Monkey, "tell me about them at once. If what you say matches what I know, you're genuine. If it's at all wrong you're impostors, and I'll take you to Their Majesties for punishment."

Seeing him sitting up on high, playing wise and cunning as he shouted at them, the young devils had nothing for it but to tell him the truth. "His Majesty has vast magical abilities and enormous powers," one of the young devils replied. "He once devoured a hundred thousand heavenly warriors in a single mouthful."

"You're an impostor," Monkey spat out when he heard this.

"Sir, Your Honour," said the young devil in panic, "I'm real. How can you call me an impostor?"

"If you're genuine why did you talk such nonsense?" Monkey replied. "No matter how big he is His Majesty couldn't have swallowed a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers in a single mouthful."

"This is something you don't know about, sir," the young devil replied. "His Majesty can do transformations.

He can make himself tall enough to hold up the sky or as small as a cabbage seed. Some years ago when the Queen Mother invited all the immortals to a peach banquet she didn't send him an invitation, so His

Majesty wanted to fight Heaven. The Jade Emperor sent a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers to subdue His Majesty, gave himself a magical body and opened his mouth that was as big as a city gate. He made as if to swallow hard, which frightened the heavenly soldiers so much that they dared not give battle, and the Southern Gate of Heaven was shut. That's how he could have swallowed a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers at a single mouthful."

Monkey grinned to himself and thought, "Frankly, I've done that too. What powers does His Second Majesty have?" he asked.

"His Second Majesty is thirty feet tall with brows like sleeping silkworms, phoenix eyes, a voice like a beautiful woman, tusks like carrying—poles and a nose like a dragon. If he's in a fight he only needs to wrinkle his nose for his enemy to be scared witless even if he's covered in bronze and iron."

Chapter 74

1039

Journey to the West

"Evil spirits who get people with their noses are easy enough to catch," said Monkey, who then asked, "and what powers does His Third Majesty have?"

"He's no monster from the mortal world," the young devil replied. "His name is Ten Thousand Miles of Cloud Roc. When he moves he rolls up the wind and shifts the waves, shaking the North as he heads for the South.

He carries a treasure about with him called the Male and Female Vital Principles Jar. Anyone who's put in that jar is turned liquid in a few moments."

That news gave Monkey something to worry about. "I'm not scared of the monsters," he thought, "but I'll have to watch out for his jar." Then he said aloud, "Your account of Their Majesties' powers isn't bad——it fits exactly with what I know. But which of them wants to eat the Tang Priest?"

"Don't you know, sir?" said the young Wind—piercer.

"As if I didn't know better than you!" shouted Monkey. "I was told to come and question you because they're worried that you don't know

all the details."

"Our Senior King and Second King have long lived in Lion Cave on Lion Mountain," the young devil replied,

"but the Third King doesn't live here. He used to live over a hundred miles to the West of here in the capital of a country called Leonia. Five hundred years ago he ate the king of the country, his civil and military officials, and everybody else in the city, young and old, male and female. So he seized their country, and now all the people there are evil monsters. I don't know which year it was in which he heard that the Tang court has sent a priest to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures. They say this priest is a good man who has cultivated his conduct for ten incarnations, and anyone who eats a piece of his flesh will live for ever and never grow old.

But the Third King is worried about the priest's disciple Sun the Novice who's a real terror, so he's come to swear brotherhood with our two kings, all three are now working together to catch the Tang Priest."

"Damn this thoroughly ill–behaved monster," thought Brother Monkey with great fury. "I'm protecting the Tang Priest while he works for the true achievement. How dare they plot to eat my man?" With a snort of fury he ground his steel teeth and brandished his iron cudgel as he leapt down from the high pinnacle and smashed the poor young devil's head into a lump of meat. When he saw what he had done Monkey felt sorry.

"Oh dear," he thought, "he meant well, telling me all about the house. Why did I finish him off all of a sudden like that? Oh well! Oh well! That's that." The splendid Great Sage had been forced to do this because his master's way ahead had been blocked. He took the little devil's pass off him, tied it round his own waist, put the "By order" flag over his shoulder, hung the bell from his waist and sounded the clappers with his hand.

Then he made a hand–spell into the wind, said a spell, shook himself, turned into the exact likeness of the junior Wind–piercer, and went straight back the way he had come, looking for the cave to find out about the three demon chieftains. Indeed:

The Handsome Monkey King had a thousand transformations

And the true power of magic to make ten thousand changes.

Monkey was rushing deep into the mountains along the way he had come when suddenly he heard shouts and whinnies. As he looked up he saw tens of thousands of little devils drawn up outside the entrance to the Lion Cave with their spears, sabers, swords, halberds, flags and banners. Monkey was delighted.

Chapter 74

1040

Journey to the West

"Li Changgeng, the planet, was telling the truth," he thought. "He wasn't lying at all." The devils were drawn up in a systematic way, each 250 forming a company, so that from the forty standards in many colours that were dancing in the wind he could tell that there were ten thousand infantry and cavalry there.

"If I go into the cave disguised as a junior Wind–piercer and one of the demon chiefs questions me about my mountain patrol," Monkey thought, "I'll have to make up answers on the spur of the moment. The moment I say anything at all wrong he'll realize who I am and I won't be able to get away. That army on the gates would stop me and I'd never get out. If I'm going to catch the demon kings I'll have to get rid of the devils on the gates first."

Do you know how he was going to do that? "The old demons have never seen me," he thought, "they've only heard of my reputation. I'll talk big and scare them with my fame and prestige. If it's true that all living beings in the middle land are destined to have the scriptures brought to them, then all I need do is talk like a hero and scare those monsters on the gate away. But if they're not destined to have the scriptures brought to them I'll never get rid of the spirits from the gates of this cave in the West even if I talk till lotus flowers appear." Thus he thought about his plans, his mind questioning his mouth and his mouth questioning his mind, as he sounded the clappers and rang the bell.

Before he could rush in through the entrance to Lion Cave he was stopped by the junior devils of the forward camp, who said, "You're back, young Wind–piercer." Monkey said nothing but kept going with his head down.

When he reached the second encampment more young devils grabbed hold of him and said, "You're back, young Wind–piercer."

"Yes," Monkey replied. "On your patrol this morning did you meet a Sun the Novice?" they asked.

"I did," Monkey replied. "He was polishing his pole."

"What's he like?" the terrified devils asked. "What sort of pole was he polishing?"

"He was squatting beside a stream," Monkey replied. "He looked like one of those gods that clear the way. If he'd stood up I'm sure he'd have been hundreds of feet tall, and the iron cudgel he was holding was a huge bar as thick as a rice – bowl. He'd put a handful of water on a rocky scar and was polishing the cudgel on it muttering, 'Pole, it's ages since I got you out to show your magic powers: This time you can kill all the demons for me, even if there are a hundred thousand of them. Then I'll kill the three demon chiefs as a sacrificial offering to you.' He's going to polish it till it shines then start by killing the ten thousand of you on the gates."

On hearing this the little devils were all terror – struck and their souls all scattered in panic. "Gentlemen,"

Monkey continued, "that Tang Priest has only got a few pounds of flesh on him. We won't get a share. So why should we have to carry the can for them? We'd do much better to scatter."

"You're right," the demons said. "Let's all run for our lives." If they had been civilized soldiers they would have stayed and fought to the death, but as they were all really wolves, tigers and leopards, running beasts and flying birds, they all disappeared with a great whoosh. Indeed, it wasn't as if the Great Sage Sun had merely talked big: it was like the time when Xiang Yu's army of eight thousand soldiers disappeared, surrounded by foes who were former comrades.

"Splendid," said monkey to himself with self – congratulation, "the old devils are as good as dead now. If this lot run away at the sound of me they'll never dare look me in the face. I'll use the same story when I go in Chapter 74

there. If I said anything different and one or two of the young devils had got inside and heard me that would give the game away." Watch him as he carefully approaches the ancient cave and boldly goes deep

inside.

If you don't know what of good or ill was to come from the demon chieftains listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 75

The Mind – Ape Bores a Hole in the Male and Female Jar

The Demon King Returns and the Way Is Preserved

The story tells how the Great Sage Sun went in through the entrance of the cave and looked to either side.

This is what he saw:

Hills of skeletons,

Forests of bones,

Human heads and hair trampled into felt,

Human skin and flesh rotted into mud,

Sinews twisted round trees,

Dried and shining like silver.

Truly there was a mountain of corpses, a sea of blood,

An unbearable stench of corruption.

The little devils to the East

Sliced the living flesh off human victims;

The evil demons to the West

Boiled and fried fresh human meat.

Apart from the heroic Handsome Monkey King

No common mortal would have dared go in.

He was soon inside the second gates, and when he looked around here he saw that things were different from outside. Here was purity, quiet elegance, beauty and calm. To left and right were rare and wonderful plants; all around were tall pines and jade – green bamboo. After

another two or three miles he reached the third gates, Chapter 75

slipped inside for a peep, and saw the three old demons sitting on high. They looked thoroughly evil. The one in the middle

Had teeth like chisels and saws,

A round head and a square face.

His voice roared like thunder;

His eyes flashed like lightning.

Upturned nostrils faced the sky;

Red eyebrows blazed with fire.

Wherever he walked

The animals were terrified;

If he sat down

The demons all trembled.

He was the king among the beasts,

The Blue – haired Lion Monster.

The one sitting on his left was like this:

Phoenix eyes with golden pupils,

Yellow tusks and powerful thighs.

Silver hair sprouting from a long nose,

Making his head look like a tail.

His brow was rounded and wrinkled,

His body massively heavy.

His voice as delicate as a beautiful woman's,

But his face was as fiendish as an ox – headed demon's.

Chapter 75

1043

Journey to the West

He treasured his tusks and cultivated his person for many years, The Ancient Yellow – tusked Elephant.

The one on the right had

Golden wings and a leviathan's head,

Leopard eyes with starry pupils.

He shook the North when he headed South,

Fierce, strong and brave.

When he turned to soaring

Quails laughed but dragons were terrified.

When he beat his phoenix wings the birds all hid their heads,

And the beasts all lost their nerve when he spread his talons.

He could fly thirty thousand miles through the clouds,

The Mighty Roc.

Beneath these two were ranged a hundred and ten commanders high and low, all in full armor and looking most imposing and murderous. The sight delighted Brother Monkey, who strode inside, quite unafraid, put down his clappers and bell, and called, "Your Majesties."

The three old demons chuckled and replied, "So you're back, young Wind – piercer."

"Yes," Monkey replied. "When you were patrolling what did you find out about where Sun the Novice is?"

"Your Majesties," Monkey replied, "I don't dare tell you."

"Why not?" the senior demon chief asked.

"I was walking along sounding my clappers and ringing my bell following Your Majesties' orders," Monkey said, "when all of a sudden I looked up and saw someone squatting and polishing a pole there. He looked like one of the gods that clear the way. If he'd stood up he'd have been well over a hundred feet tall. He'd scooped up some water in his hand and was polishing his iron bar on the rocky scar. He was saying to himself that his cudgel still hadn't the chance to show its magical powers here and that when he'd shined it up he was coming to attack Your Majesties. That's how I realized he was Sun the Novice and came here to report."

Chapter 75

On hearing this the senior demon chief broke into a sweat all over and shivered so that his teeth chattered as he said, "Brothers, I don't think we should start any trouble with the Tang Priest. His disciple has tremendous magical powers and he's polishing his cudgel to attack us. Whatever are we to do?"

"Little ones," he shouted, "call everybody, high and low, who's outside the cave to come inside and shut the gates. Let them pass."

"Your Majesty," said one of the subordinate officers who knew what had happened, "the little devils outside have all scattered."

"Why?" the senior demon asked.

"They must have heard about his terrible reputation. Shut the gates at once! At once!" The hosts of demons noisily bolted all the front and back gates firmly.

"Now they've shut the gates they might ask me all sorts of questions about things in here," Monkey thought with alarm "If I don't know the right answers I'll give the game away and they'll catch me. I'd better give them another scare and get them to open the gates to let me out."

"Your Majesty," he said, stepping forward, "there were some other wicked things he said."

"What else?" the senior demon chief asked.

"He said he was going to skin Your Senior Majesty," replied Brother

Monkey, "slice up the bones of His Second Majesty, and rip out His Third Majesty's sinews. If you shut the gates and refuse to go out he can do transformations. He might turn himself into a fly, get in through a crack between the gates and catch us all.

Then we'll be done for."

"Be very careful, brothers," said the senior demon. "We haven't had a fly here for years, so any fly that gets in will be Sun the Novice."

"So I'll change into a fly and frighten them into opening the gates," thought Monkey, smiling to himself. The splendid Great Sage then slipped aside, reached up to pull a hair from the back of his head, blew on it with a magic breath, called "Change!" and turned it into a golden fly that flew straight into the old demon's face.

"Brothers," said the old demon in a panic, "this is terrible! He's inside!" All the demons great and small were so alarmed that they rushed forward to swat the fly with their rakes and brooms.

The Great Sage could not help giggling aloud, which was just what he should not have done as it revealed his true face. The third demon chief leapt forward, grabbed him and said, "Brothers, he almost had us fooled."

"Who had who fooled?" the senior demon asked.

"The young devil who reported just now was no junior Wind－piercer," the third chief replied, "but Sun the Novice himself. He must have run into a junior Wind－piercer and somehow or other murdered him and done this transformation to trick us."

"He's rumbled me," thought Monkey with alarm, rubbing his face.

"What do you mean, I'm Sun the Novice?" Monkey said to the senior demon chief. "I'm a junior Wind－piercer. His Majesty's mistaken."

"Brother," said the senior demon, "he really is a junior Wind－piercer. He's in the roll－call out front three times a day. I know him. Do you have a pass?" he went on to ask Monkey.

"Yes," Monkey replied, pulling his clothes apart to produce it. Seeing that it looked genuine the senior demon said, "Brother, don't mistreat him."

"Elder brother," the third demon chief replied, "didn't you see him slip aside just now and giggle? I saw him show his face: it's like a thunder god's. When I grabbed hold of him he turned back into what he looks like now. Little ones," he called, "fetch ropes!" The officers then fetched ropes.

The third demon chief knocked Monkey over and tied his hands and feet together. When his clothes were stripped off he was most evidently the Protector of the Horses. Now of the seventy–two transformations that Monkey could perform, when he turned himself into a bird, a beast, a plant, a tree, a vessel or an insect he changed his whole body. When he turned into another person, however, he could only change his head and face but not his body, and indeed he was still covered with brown hair and had red thighs and a tail.

"That's Sun the Novice's body," the senior demon chief said when he saw this, "and a junior Wind–piercer's face. It's him! Little ones," he ordered, "bring wine and give His Third Majesty a cup of it to congratulate him.

Now that we've captured Sun the Novice the Tang Priest is as good as a meal in our mouths."

"We mustn't drink now," said the third demon chief. "Sun the Novice is a slippery customer and is good at escaping by magic. I'm worried he might get away. Tell the juniors to bring the jar out and put him inside.

Then we can drink."

"Yes, yes," said the senior demon chief with a smile, who then chose thirty–six little demons to go inside, open the storerooms, and carry the jar out. Do you know how big the jar was? It was only two feet four inches high. So why were thirty–six people needed to carry it? It was because the jar was a treasure of the two vital forces, male and female, and contained the seven precious things, the eight trigrams and the twenty–four periods of the year that thirty–six carriers were required to match the number of the stars of the Dipper.

Before long the precious jar had been carried out, set down outside the third pair of gates, cleaned up and opened. Monkey was untied, stripped bare and sucked inside the jar with a hiss by magical vapor

that came out of it.

The lid was then put back on and sealed on with a label, after which the demons went off to drink, saying,

"Now that he's in our jar that monkey can forget all about his journey West. The only way he'll be able to pay his respects to the Buddha and fetch the scriptures now will be by pushing the wheel of destiny backwards and being reborn." Watch how all the demons great and small go laughing off to celebrate. But of that no more.

Once inside the jar the Great Sage, who was very cramped, decided to transform himself and squat down in the middle, where he found it very cool. "Those evil spirits don't live up to their reputation," he said to himself, laughing aloud. "Why ever do they tell people that anyone put in this jar will be turned to pus and blood in a few moments. It's so cool that spending seven or eight years here would be no problem."

Alas! The Great Sage did not know about this treasure. Anyone put inside it who said nothing for a year would stay cool for a year; but the moment a voice was heard fires began to turn. Before Monkey had finished speaking the whole jar was full of flame. Luckily he could use the knack of making fire – averting magic with his hands as he sat in the middle of the jar completely unafraid. When he had endured the flames for an hour forty snakes emerged from all around to bite him. Swinging his arms about him Monkey grabbed hold of all of them, twisted with all his strength, and broke them into eighty pieces. A little later three fire dragons Chapter 75

appeared to circle above and below Monkey, which was really unbearable.

It drove Monkey into a helpless desperation of which he was only too conscious, "The other things were no trouble," he said, "but these three fire dragons are a real problem. If I don't get out soon the fire will attack my heart, and what then? I'll make myself grow," he went on to think, "and push my way out." The splendid Great Sage made a spell with his hands, said the words of a spell and called out, "Grow!" He made himself over a dozen feet tall, but as he grew the jar grew with him, enclosing him tightly. When he made himself smaller, the jar shrank too.

"This is terrible," Brother Monkey thought with alarm, "terrible. It grows when I grow and shrinks when I get smaller. Why? What am I to do?" Before he had finished speaking his ankle began to hurt. Putting his hand down at once to feel it he found that it had been burnt so badly it had gone soft. "I don't know what to do," he said with anxiety, "My ankle's been cooked tender. I'm a cripple now." He could not stop the tears from flowing. Indeed:

When suffering at the demons' hands he thought of his master;

In facing deadly peril he worried about the Tang Priest.

"Master," he exclaimed, "since I was converted by the Bodhisattva Guanyin and delivered from my heavenly punishment you and I have toiled over many a mountain. I've beaten and wiped out a lot of monsters, subdued Pig and Friar Sand, and gone through no end of suffering. All this was done in the hope of reaching the West and completing the true achievement together. Never did I expect to meet these vicious demons today. Now I've been stupid enough to get myself killed in here I've left you stuck in the middle of the mountains. What a mess to be in for someone who used to be as famous as I was!"

Just when he was feeling thoroughly miserable he suddenly remembered, "Years ago the Bodhisattva gave me three life–saving hairs on the Coiled Snake Mountain. I wonder if I've still got them. I'd better look for them."

He felt all over his body and found three very rigid hairs on the back of his head.

"All the other hair on my body is soft except for these three that are as hard as spears," he said with delight.

"They must be my lifesavers." Gritting his teeth against the pain, he pulled the three hairs out, blew on them with magic breath and called, "Change!" One of them turned into a steel drill, one into a strip of bamboo, and one into a silken cord. He made the bamboo strip into a bow to which he fixed the drill. After a noisy spell of drilling at the bottom of the jar he made a hole through which the light came in. "I'm in luck," he said with glee, "I'm in luck. Now I can get out." No sooner had he transformed himself ready to escape than the jar became cool again. Why was that? It cooled because the hole he had bored in it let the male and female vital forces escape.

The splendid Great Sage put his hairs back, made himself small by

turning into the tiniest of insects, a very delicate creature as thin as a whisker and as long as an eyebrow hair, and slipped out through the hole. Instead of making his escape Monkey flew straight to the senior demon chief's head and landed on it. The senior demon, who was drinking, slammed his goblet down and asked, "Third brother, has Sun the Novice been liquefied yet?"

"Is the time up?" the third demon chief asked. The senior demon told his messengers to carry the jar in. When the thirty–six young devils picked the jar up they found that it was far lighter.

Chapter 75

1047

Journey to the West

"Your Majesty," they reported with alarm, "the jar's lighter."

"Nonsense!" the senior demon shouted. "It has the full powers of the male and female vital forces. It couldn't possibly get lighter."

One of the junior demons who liked showing off picked the jar up and said, "Look. It is lighter, isn't it?"

When the senior demon took the lid off to look in he saw that it was bright inside.

"It's empty," he could not help shouting aloud, "it's leaked." And Monkey, sitting on his head, could not help shouting, "Search, my lads! He's escaped."

"He's escaped," all the monsters shouted, "he's escaped!" The order was then given to shut the gates.

With that Monkey shook himself, took back the clothes that had been taken off him, turned back into himself and leapt out of the cave. "Behave yourselves, evil spirits," he flung back insultingly. "I've bored through the jar and you can't keep anyone in it any more. You'll have to take it outside and shit in it."

Shouting and yelling with glee he went straight back on his cloud to where the Tang Priest was. Here he found the venerable gentleman making symbolic incense with a pinch of earth and praying to the sky. Monkey stopped his cloud to listen to what he was saying. Sanzang had his hands together in front of his chest and was saying to Heaven,

"All you immortals up there in the clouds,

The Dings and the Jias and each god and goddess,

Protect my disciple, whose powers are enormous,

And magic is boundless, the good Sun the Novice."

When the Great Sage heard this he decided to redouble his efforts. Putting his cloud away he went up to Sanzang and called, "Master, I'm back."

Sanzang held him as he said, "Wukong, you have been to great trouble. I was very concerned because you had gone so far into these high mountains and not come back for so long a time. How dangerous is the mountain in fact?"

"Master," Monkey replied with a smile, "that trip just now depended in the first place on the good destiny of all the living beings in the East, secondly on your boundless achievement and great virtue, and thirdly on your disciple's magical powers." Then he told the whole story of how he had pretended to be a Wind–piercer, been drawn into the jar and escaped.

"Now I've seen your face again, Master, It's like having a second life."

Sanzang expressed endless thanks then asked, "Did you not fight the evil spirits this time?"

"No, I didn't," replied Brother Monkey.

Chapter 75

1048

Journey to the West

"Then you won't be able to escort me safely across this mountain," Sanzang said, at which Monkey, who hated to admit he was beaten, shouted, "What do you mean, I won't be able to escort you?"

"If you and they have not yet had it out and you can only give me evasive answers I will never dare press ahead," the venerable elder replied.

"Master," laughed the Great Sage, "you really don't understand. As the saying goes, you can't spin a thread from a single strand of silk, and you can't clap one—handed. There are three demon chiefs and thousands of the little devils. How could I fight them all single—handed?"

"If you are that outnumbered you would indeed find it hard by yourself," Sanzang replied. "Pig and Friar Sand also have their talents. I shall tell them to go with you to help you clean up the path across the mountain and escort me over it."

"What you say is completely right, Master," replied Monkey with a smile. "Tell Friar Sand to protect you while Pig comes with me."

"Brother," said Pig in alarm, "you're a poor judge. I'm rough and I can't do anything much. I'd just get in the way as I walked along. What use would I be to you?"

"You may not be up to much, brother," Monkey replied, "but you're someone. As the saying goes, even a fart can swell the wind. You'd make me feel a bit braver."

"All right," Pig said, "all right. You can take me with you. But don't play any of your tricks on me when the going gets tough."

"Don't forget that Friar Sand and I will be waiting here," said Sanzang.

The idiot braced himself and set off a gale with Monkey that carried

them by cloud up to the top of the mountain where the entrance to the cave was. They saw at once that the gates were shut tight. There was nobody in sight anywhere around. Monkey went forward, his iron cudgel in his hands, to shout at the top of his voice, "Open up, evil monsters! Come out right now and fight Monkey!" When the young devils in the cave went inside to report the senior demon shook with terror as he commented,

"I've heard tell for years of that monkey's ferocity;

Now I can vouch for the story's veracity."

"What do you mean, elder brother?" the second demon chief asked.

"When that Sun the Novice first turned himself into a fly to sneak in here none of us realized who he was except our Third Brother, who put him in the jar. He used his skills to drill a hole in the jar, pick up his clothes and get out. Now he's outside challenging us to battle. Who's brave enough to be the first to take him on?"

Nobody replied. The senior demon asked again; again there was no response. Everyone was pretending to be deaf and dumb.

Chapter 75

1049

Journey to the West

"We've got ourselves a lousy reputation in the West already," the senior demon chief said in fury. "Now that Sun the Novice has treated us with such contempt today our reputation will stand even lower if we don't fight him. I'm going out there to chance my old life on three rounds with him. If I can hold out for those three rounds the Tang Priest will still be a meal in our mouths. If I can't then shut the gates and let them pass." He then kitted himself out in his armor, had the gates opened and went out. As Monkey and Pig watched from beside the gates they saw that he was a fine monster:

On iron brow and brazen head a precious helmet

With tassels dancing brightly in the wind.

His eyes both flashed as if with lightning,

And ruddy glowed the hair at his temples.

Pointed and sharp were his silvery claws,

And his saw – like teeth were set close and neat.

His armor was golden, without any seam,

Bound with a dragon sash that could foresee the future.

In his hand flashed a cutlass of steel.

Such martial might is rare in the world.

With a voice that roared like thunder he asked,

"Who is that knocking at my gates?"

"Your grandfather, Lord Sun, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven," said Monkey, turning to face the gate.

"Are you Sun the Novice?" asked the demon with a laugh. "You've got a cheek, ape. I never gave you any trouble, so why are you here challenging me to battle?"

"'No waves come without a wind; without the tide the waters are still,'" Monkey replied. "Would I have come looking for you if you hadn't given me trouble? The reason why I'm here to fight is because your gang of foxes and dogs is plotting to eat my master."

"From the way you're acting so fierce and shouting at our gates you must want a fight," the old demon replied.

"Yes," Monkey said. "Stop all that ranting and raving then," said the demon. "It would be most unfair if I brought out my devil soldiers and drew them up in battle order with flags flying and drums beating to fight you as I'm on my own territory. I'll fight you single – handed with no helpers for either side."

When Monkey heard this he shouted, "Keep out of the way, Pig, and let's see how he copes with me." The idiot did indeed get out of the way.

"Come over here," the senior demon shouted, "and be a chopping block for me. Let me hack you three times as hard as I can with sword on your bare head. After that I'll let your Tang Priest pass. If you can't take it then hand your Tang Priest over at once. He'll be a tasty morsel to help our rice down."

"Bring out a brush and some paper if you have them in your cave and I'll give you a bond. You can hack at me from today till next year, but it'll be nothing to me."

The old demon then summoned up all his might, took up a stance with his feet apart, lifted his sword with both hands and hacked at the top of the Great Sage's head. The Great Sage raised his head, and though there was a mighty crash his scalp did not even go red.

"That monkey really does have a hard head," exclaimed the old demon with shock.

"You wouldn't know about it," said Monkey with a laugh. "I was Born with a skull of bronze and iron,

Like nobody else's in all the world.

Hammer and axe will never smash me;

I went in Lord Lao Zi's furnace when I was a boy.

The Star Lords of the Four Dippers helped mould me,

The twenty–eight constellations all used their skill.

I've often been soaked in water but never come to harm,

And all over my body the sinews are knotty.

The Tang Priest, fearing I would not stand firm,

Placed a golden band around my head."

"Cut out that insolence, ape," the senior demon said, "and take these two blows from my sword. I'm most certainly not going to spare your life."

"It's nothing," Monkey replied. "Have another cut like that if you like."

"You monkey," the old demon said, "you don't know about this sword,"

Created in furnaces of metal and fire,

A hundred times tempered by divine craftsmanship.

Its sharp blade follows the Three Strategies,

And it is as strong as described in the Six Plans.

The point is as fine as a housefly's tail,

And supple as the body of a white dragon.

When it goes to the mountains dense clouds arise;

If it plunges into the sea the great waves roll.

It has been burnished times beyond number,

Heated and tempered many hundred times over.

Deep in the mountains it is kept in the caves;

Great is the glory it has won when in battle.

If I use it to strike at your monkish pate

I'll cut it into a pair of gourd ladles."

"You're blind, evil spirit," laughed the Great Sage, "if you think my head is just gourd ladles. I'll let you hack at me if you're silly enough to want to. Have another go and see what happens."

The senior demon raised his sword for another hack, which the Great Sage moved his head forward to meet.

With a loud band his head was split into two, whereupon the Great Sage rolled on the ground and gave himself a second body. The sight so alarmed the demon that he lowered his sword.

Watching all this from a distance Pig said with a laugh, "Give him a couple more hacks, old devil, then there'll be four of him."

Pointing at Brother Monkey the senior demon said, "I'd heard that you can use self–dividing magic. Why are you showing it off to me now?"

"What self–dividing magic?" Monkey asked.

"Why was it that the first time I hacked you it made no impact, but this time I cut you in two?" the senior demon asked. "Don't worry, evil spirit," said the Great Sage with a smile. "If you cut me ten thousand times there'll be twenty thousand of me."

"You ape," the demon said, "you may be able to divide yourself but you can't put yourself together again. If you can, hit me with your cudgel."

Chapter 75

1052

Journey to the West

"Don't talk nonsense," said the Great Sage. "You asked to take three cuts at me but only took two. Now you've invited me to hit you once. I'm not Monkey if I hit you one and a half times."

"Very well," said the senior demon.

The splendid Great Sage hugged his two bodies together, rolled, became one body again and struck with his cudgel at the demon's head. The old demon raised his sword to parry the blow. "Damned ape," he said,

"you've got a cheek! How dare you come here attacking me with a mourner's staff like that?"

"If you ask about this cudgel of mine," shouted the Great Sage, "everybody in heaven and earth has heard of it."

"What's it famous for?" the senior demon asked. To this Monkey replied:

"The cudgel is made of nine–cycled wrought iron

Tempered by Lord Lao Zi himself in his furnace.

King Yu called it a divine treasure when he obtained it

To hold the eight rivers and four oceans in place.

In its middle the constellations are secretly set out,

And each end is banded with yellow gold.

Ghosts and gods are amazed at its intricate decorations,

Dragon patterns and phoenix signs.

Known as the Divine Male Cudgel,

It was inaccessibly deep in the bed of the sea.

Its shape can change and it knows how to fly,

Sending clouds of many colours drifting through the air.

Once it was mine I took it back to my mountain,

Where I discovered how its infinite changes.

When I want size it's as thick as a vat,

Or it can be as thin as an iron wire,

Huge as a mountain or small as a needle,

Adapting its length to the wishes of my heart.

Chapter 75

1053

Journey to the West

Lightly I lift it and coloured clouds spring up,

Or it flies through the sky and flashes like lightning.

The cold air it gives off chills all who feel it,

And ominous mists appear in the sky.

I have carried it with me to beat dragons and tigers,

Travelling to all of the ends of the earth.

Once with this cudgel I made havoc in heaven,

And used its great might to wreck the peach banquet.

The heavenly kings were unable to beat me,

And Nezha was hard pressed to match me in combat.

With this cudgel against them the gods had no safe refuge;

A hundred thousand heavenly troops all scattered and fled.

The gods of thunder guarded the Hall of Miraculous Mist

When the cudgel attacked the Palace of Universal Brightness

All of the angels at court were flustered

And the Jade Emperor's ministers were thrown into panic.

I raised my cudgel to overturn the Palace of the Dipper,

Then turned back to shake up the South Pole Compound.

Seeing my dread cudgel at his golden gates

The Jade Emperor invited the Buddha to see me.

The soldier takes defeat and victory in his stride;

There is nothing to choose between suffering and disaster.

I stuck it out for full five hundred years

Until I was converted by the Bodhisattva Guanyin.

Then a holy monk appeared in Tang

Who swore a mighty oath to heaven,

To save the souls in the City of the Unjustly Slain

And fetch the sutras at an assembly on Vulture Mountain.

On the journey to the West are many evil monsters

Whose actions would be a great obstacle to him.

So, knowing that my cudgel is matchless in the world,

He begged me to be his companion on the journey.

When it struck down evil spirits they were sent to the Underworld,
Their flesh turned to red dust and their bones all to powder.

Evil spirits everywhere were killed by the cudgel,

In thousands upon thousands too numerous to count.

Up above it wrecked the Dipper and Bull Palace,

And below it ruined the Senluo Court in Hell.

Of the heavenly generals it routed the Nine Bright Shiners,

And it wounded all of the Underworld's judges.

Dropped from mid－air it shakes mountains and rivers;

It is stronger than the sword of an evil star.

With this cudgel alone I protect the Tang Priest

And kill all the evil monsters in the world."

When the monster heard this he trembled, lifted his sword and struck with all his strength. Chuckling, Monkey blocked the blow with his iron cudgel. At first the two of them struggled in front of the cave, but then they both sprang up and fought in mid－air. It was a splendid battle.

The divine rod had once secured the bed of Heaven's River:

The As－You－Will cudgel is the finest in the world,

Praise of its powers enraged the demon chief,

Whose mighty cutlass was full of great magic.

When they fought outside the gates they were still open to reason, But no mercy was shown in their battle in the sky.

One could change his appearance at will;

The other could make himself grow on the spot.

The fight was so intense that the sky filled with clouds,

And all of the plains were enveloped in mist.

One had often determined to devour the monk Sanzang;

The other used his magic to protect the Tang Priest.

All because the Lord Buddha transmitted the scriptures

Evil and good were opposed in harsh conflict.

The senior demon and the Great Sage fought over twenty rounds without either emerging the victor while Pig admired their magnificent battle from down below until, unable to restrain himself, he grabbed his rake and leapt up into the air, riding on the wind to strike at the evil monster's face. The demon panicked, not realizing that Pig had no staying power, but could only rush recklessly in and give people a fright. All the demon could see was that Pig had a long snout, big ears and a vicious way with his rake, so he abandoned the struggle, threw his sword away, turned and fled.

"After him," the Great Sage shouted, "after him!" The idiot raised his rake and went down in all his ferocious might straight after the monster. Seeing how close Pig was to him the old demon stood still in front of the mountainside, faced the wind, shook himself, resumed his real appearance and opened his mouth to devour Pig. This so terrified Pig that he fled as fast as he could into the undergrowth, not caring that brambles and thorns were tearing his head. He sat there trembling and listening out for the sound of the cudgel. When Monkey caught up with him the monster opened his jaws to eat Monkey up too. This was just what Monkey intended. Putting his cudgel away he went straight towards the demon, who swallowed him in a single gulp.

This gave the idiot such a fright as he was hiding in the undergrowth that he grumbled to himself, "You've got no common sense, Protector

of the Horses. Why did you go towards the monster when he wanted to eat you up instead of running away? Now he's swallowed you. Today you're still a monk, but tomorrow you'll be a turd." Only when the monster had departed in triumph did Pig emerge from the undergrowth and slip back by the way he had come.

Sanzang and Friar Sand were still waiting for Pig at the foot of the mountain when they saw him come running breathless towards them. "Pig," said Sanzang with horror, "why are you in this terrible state? Why is Wukong not here?"

"My brother was swallowed up by the evil spirit in a single gulp," Pig replied amid sobs, at which Sanzang collapsed in terror. A little later he stamped and beat his chest, saying, "Disciple, I thought you were good at subduing demons and were going to take me to see the Buddha in the Western Heaven. Who would have thought that you would die at this demon's hand today? Alas! Alas! All the efforts of my disciples have now Chapter 75

turned to dust." The master was thoroughly miserable.

Just look at the idiot. Instead of coming over to comfort his master he calls, "Friar Sand, fetch the luggage.

Let's split it between us."

"Why, brother?" Friar Sand asked. "Divide it up," Pig replied, "and all of us can go our separate ways. You can go back to the River of Flowing Sand and carry on eating people. I'll go back to Gao Village and see my wife. We can sell the white horse to buy the master a coffin to be buried in." The master was so upset when he heard this that he wept aloud to Heaven.

We shall leave them and return to the senior demon chief.

When he had swallowed Monkey he thought he had won, so he went straight back to his cave, where all the other demons came out to ask him how the fight had gone.

"I've got one of them," the senior demon said.

"Which one is that?" asked the second demon with delight.

"Sun the Novice," the senior demon replied.

"Where have you got him?" the second demon chief said.

"In my stomach," said the senior demon, "I swallowed him."

"Elder brother," said the third demon chief with horror, "I forgot to tell you that Sun the Novice wasn't worth eating."

"I'm delicious," said the Great Sage from inside the demon's stomach, "and I'll stop you from ever feeling hungry again."

This caused the junior devils such a shock that they reported, "This is terrible, Your Senior Majesty. Sun the Novice is talking inside your stomach."

"That doesn't frighten me," said the senior demon. "If I'm clever enough to catch him do you think I'm not clever enough to deal with him? Make me some hot salty water at once. I'll pour it into my stomach, vomit him out, and have him fried at my leisure to eat as a snack with some drinks."

The junior devils soon had ready half a bowl of hot salty water that the old demon drained in one, filling his mouth. He then really did vomit, but the Great Sage, who had taken root in his stomach, did not even move.

The monster then pressed his throat and vomited again till his head was spinning, his eyes in a daze and his gallbladder split, but still Monkey would not be shifted. By now the senior demon was gasping for breath.

"Sun the Novice," he called, "won't you come out?"

"Not yet," Monkey replied. "I don't want to come out now."

"Why not?" the old demon asked.

Chapter 75

1057

Journey to the West

"You really don't understand, evil spirit," said Monkey. "Ever since I've been a monk I've had scant food and clothing. Although it's autumn now and getting cool I'm still only wearing a thin tunic. But it's warm

in your stomach and there are no drafts down here. I think I'll spend the winter here before coming out."

When the evil spirits heard this they all said, "Your Majesty, Sun the Novice wants to spend the winter in your stomach."

"If he wants to spend the winter there I'll take to meditation and use magic to shift him," the senior demon said. "I won't eat anything all winter. The Protector of the Horses will starve to death."

"You just don't understand, my boy," the Great Sage said. "I came via Guangzhou when I started escorting the Tang Priest and I've got a folding cooking pan with me that I brought in here to cook myself a mixed grill. I'll take my time enjoying your liver, bowels, stomach and lungs. They'll be enough to keep me going till spring."

"Brother," said the second demon chief with shock, "that ape would do it too."

"Brother," said the third demon, "perhaps he can eat up some bits and pieces, but I don't know where is he going to set up his pan."

"The collar bone is an ideal stand," replied Monkey.

"This is terrible," said the third demon. "If he sets up his pan and lights a fire won't the smoke get into your nose and make you sneeze?"

"That'll be no problem," said Monkey with a laugh. "I'll use my gold −banded cudgel to push a hole through his skull. That'll be a skylight for me and serve as a chimney too."

The old demon heard this and was most alarmed despite saying that he was not afraid. All he could do was to summon up his courage and call, "Don't be scared, brothers. Bring me some of that drugged wine. When I down a few goblets of that the drugs will kill the monkey."

At this Monkey smiled to himself and thought, "When I made havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago I drank the Jade Emperor's wine and ate Lord Lao Zi's elixir, the Queen Mother's peaches, the marrow of phoenix bones and dragon livers. I've eaten everything. What kind of drugged wine could do me any harm?"

By then the junior devils had strained two jugfuls of drugged wine, a goblet of which they handed to the senior demon chief, who took it in his hands.

Monkey, who could smell it from inside the demon's belly, called out, "Don't give it to him!" The splendid Great Sage then tipped his head back and turned it into the bell of a trumpet that he placed wide open below the demon's throat. The demon gulped the wine down noisily and Monkey noisily received it. The demon swallowed the second cupful and Monkey noisily drank that too. This went on till Monkey had drunk all of the seven or eight cupfuls that the demon downed.

"That's enough," the demon said, putting the goblet down. "Normally my stomach feels as if it's on fire after a couple of cups of this wine," he said, "but this time my face hasn't even gone red after seven or eight."

Now the Great Sage was not a heavy drinker, so after taking these seven or eight cupfuls he started to act drunk in the demon's stomach, propping himself up, falling flat on his face, kicking about him, swinging on the demon's liver, doing headstands and somersaults, and dancing wildly. This caused the monster such unbearable pain that he collapsed.

If you don't know whether he lived or died listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 76

When the Heart Spirit Stays in the Home the Demons Submit

The Mother of Wood Helps Bring Monsters to the Truth

The story tells how after the Great Sage had struggled in his stomach for a while the senior demon collapsed in the dust. He made no sound and was not breathing either. As he said nothing Monkey thought the demon was dead, so he stopped hitting him. When the demon chief recovered his breath he called out, "Most merciful and most compassionate Bodhisattva, Great Sage Equaling Heaven."

"My boy," said Monkey when he heard this, "don't waste your effort. You could save yourself a few words by simply calling me Grandpa Sun."

Desperate to save his skin, the evil monster really did call out, "Grandpa! Grandpa! I was wrong. I shouldn't have eaten you, and now you're destroying me. I beg you, Great Sage, in your mercy and compassion take pity on my antlike greed for life and spare me. If you do I'll escort your master across the mountain."

Although the Great Sage was a tough hero he was most eager to help the Tang Priest in his journey, so on hearing the evil monster's pathetic pleas and flattery he decided once more to be kind.

"Evil monster," he shouted, "I'll spare your life. How are you going to escort my master?"

"We don't have any gold, silver, pearls, jade, agate, coral, crystal, amber, tortoiseshell or other such treasures here to give him, but my two brothers and I will carry him in a rattan chair across the mountain."

"If you could carry him in a chair that would be better than treasure," said Monkey with a smile. "Open your mouth: I'm coming out."

The demon then opened his mouth, whereupon the third chief went over to him and whispered in his ear, "Bite him as he comes out, brother. Chew the monkey to bits and swallow him. Then he won't be able to hurt you."

Now Monkey could hear all this from inside, so instead of coming straight out he thrust his gold-banded cudgel out first as a test. The demon did indeed take a bite at it, noisily smashing one of his front teeth in the process.

"You're a nice monster, aren't you!" exclaimed Monkey, pulling his cudgel back. "I spare your life and agree to come out, but you try to murder me by biting me. I'm not coming out now. I'm going to kill you. I won't come out! I won't!"

"Brother," the senior demon chief complained to the third one, "what you've done is destroy one of your own kind. I'd persuaded him to come out but you would have to tell me to bite him. Now I'm in agony from my broken tooth. What are we to do?"

In the face of the senior demon chief's complaints the third demon chief tried the method of making the enemy lose his temper.

"Sun the Novice," he yelled at the top of his voice, "you have a thundering reputation. They tell of how Chapter 76

mighty you were outside the Southern Gate of Heaven and at the Hall of Miraculous Mist. I'd heard that you've been capturing demons along your way to the Western Heaven. But now I see that you're only a very small – time ape."

"What makes me small – time?" Monkey asked.

"A hero who only roams three hundred miles around will go three thousand miles to make his fame resound,"

the third chief replied. "Come out and fight me if you're a real tough guy. What do you mean by messing about in someone else's stomach? If you're not small – time what are you?"

"Yes, yes, yes," thought Monkey when he heard this. "It wouldn't be at all difficult for me to tear this demon's bowels to bits, rip up his liver, and kill him," the Great Sage shouted. "But I'd destroy my own reputation in the process. I'll have to forget about it. Open your mouth and I'll come out and fight you. The only problem is that this cave of yours is much too cramped for me to use my weapons. We'll have to go somewhere where there's more room."

On hearing this the third demon chief mustered all the demons young and old from all around. There were over thirty thousand of them armed with the finest and sharpest weapons who came out of the cave to form a line of battle symbolizing heaven, earth and mankind. They were all waiting for Monkey to come out of the senior demon's mouth before rushing him. The second demon chief then helped the senior demon out through the entrance of the cave, where he shouted, "Sun the Novice! If you're such a tough guy, come out. There's good battlefield here for us to fight on."

The Great Sage could tell that this was an open area from the calls of crows, magpies and cranes that he could hear in the monster's belly. "If I don't come out I'll be breaking faith with them," he thought. "But if I do these demons are beasts at heart behind their human faces. They tried to lure me out and bite me when they promised to carry the master across the ridge. Now they've got their army here. Oh well! I'll let them have it both ways. I'll go out but I'll leave a root in his stomach too."

With that he put his hand behind him to pluck a tiny hair from his

tail, blew on it with magic breath, called

"Change!" and made it into a string as fine as a hair but some four hundred feet long. As the string came outside it grew thicker in the wind. One end Monkey fastened round the evil monster's heart in a slip—knot that he did not tighten— —if he had it would have caused great pain. The other end he held in his hand as he said to himself, "If they agree to escort my master across the ridge when I come out this time I'll leave it at that. But if they refuse and go for me with their weapons so hard that I can't cope with them I'll just need to pull this rope. I'll get the same results as if I were still inside."

He then made himself tiny and crawled up as far as the throat, from where he could see that the evil spirit had opened his mouth wide. Rows of steel teeth were set above and below like sharp knives. "This is no good," he thought at once, "no good at all. If I take this rope out through his mouth and he can't stand the pain he'll be able to cut through it with a single bite. I'll have to go out where there aren't any teeth." The splendid Great Sage paid out the string as he crawled up the demon's upper palate and into his nostril, which made his nose itch. The demon sneezed with a loud "atchoo," blowing Monkey out.

As he felt the wind blowing him Monkey bowed and grew over thirty feet long, keeping the string in one hand and holding the iron cudgel in the other. The wicked monster raised his steel sword as soon as he saw Monkey appear and hacked at his face. The Great Sage met the blow one—handed with his cudgel. Then the second demon chief with his spear and the third chief with his halberd went for him furiously. The Great Sage relaxed his pull on the rope, put his iron cudgel away and made off at speed by cloud, afraid that he would be unable to fight properly when surrounded by so many young devils. Once he had leapt out of the demons' camp he brought his cloud down on a spacious and empty mountain top and pulled with both hands on the rope as hard Chapter 76

as he could. This gave the senior demon a pain in the heart. The demon struggled upwards in agony, whereupon the Great Sage pulled him down again.

As they all watched from afar the junior demons all shouted: "Don't provoke him, Your Majesty! Let him go.

That ape has no sense of when things ought to be done. He's flying a kite before the beginning of April."

When the Great Sage heard this he gave a mighty stamp, at which the senior demon came whistling down out of the sky like a spinning —wheel to crash into the dust, making a crater some two feet deep in the hard earth at the foot of the mountain.

This gave the second and third demon chiefs such a fright that they landed their clouds together and rushed forward to grab hold of the rope and kneel at the foot of the mountain. "Great Sage," they pleaded, "we thought you were an immortal of vast and boundless generosity. We'd never dreamed that you would be as small—minded as a rat or a snail. It's true that we lured you out to give battle, but we never expected that you would tie a rope round our eldest brother's heart"

"You're a thorough disgrace, you damned gang of demons," said Monkey with a laugh. "Last time you tried to trick me into coming out so you could bite me and this time you've lured me out to face an army ready for battle. It's obvious that you've got tens of thousands of soldiers here to tackle me when I'm alone. Most unreasonable. I'll pull him away. I'm going to drag him off to see my master."

"If in your mercy and compassion you spare our lives, Great Sage," the demons said, all kowtowing together,

"we vow to escort your master across this mountain."

"If you want to live all you have to do is cut the rope with your sword," said Monkey with a laugh.

"My lord," the senior monster said, "I can cut the rope outside, but it's no good having the length inside that's tied round my heart. It sticks in my throat so uncomfortably that it makes me feel sick."

"In that case," said Monkey, "open your mouth and I'll go back inside to undo the rope." This alarmed the senior demon, who said, "If you don't come out when you go in this time I'll be in a mess, a real mess."

"I know how to undo the end of the rope that's in you from the outside," Monkey replied. "But when I've undone it will you really escort my master across?"

"We will as soon as you've undone it," the senior demon chief replied. "I wouldn't dare lie about this." Now that he had satisfied himself the demon was telling the truth Monkey shook himself and put the hair

back on his body, whereupon the monster's heart pains stopped. It was the Great Sage Sun's transforming magic that had tied the hair round his heart in the first place, which was why the pain ended as soon as the hair was put back on Monkey.

The three demon chiefs then rose up into the air to thank him with the words, "Please go back now, Great Sage, and pack your luggage. We will carry a chair down to fetch him." The demon horde then all put their weapons down and went back into the cave.

Having put his rope away the Great Sage went straight back to the Eastern side of the ridge, and when he was still a long way away he saw the Tang Priest lying on the ground, rolling around and howling. Pig and Friar Sand had opened the bundles of luggage and were dividing it up.

"Don't tell me," thought Monkey with a quiet sigh. "No doubt Pig has told the master that I've been eaten up by evil spirits. The master's sobbing his heart out because he can't bear to be without me and the idiot's dividing the things ready for us all to split up. Oh dear! I can't be sure, so I'd better go down and give the Chapter 76

master a shout."

Bringing his cloud down, Monkey shouted, "Master!" As soon as Friar Sand heard this he started complaining to Pig.

"All you want is to see people dead, just like a coffin stand," he said. "Our elder brother wasn't killed but you said he was and started this business here. Of course he's bound to kick up a row."

"But I saw him with my own eyes being eaten up by the evil spirit in one mouthful," Pig replied. "I'm sure we're just seeing that ape's spirit because it's an unlucky day."

Monkey then went up to Pig and hit him in the face with a slap that sent him staggering. "Cretin!" he said. "Is this my spirit you can see?"

Rubbing his face, the idiot replied, "But the monster really did eat you up, brother. How can you— —how can you have come back to life?"

"Useless gumboil!" said Monkey. "After he ate me I grabbed his

bowels, twisted his lungs, tied a rope round his heart and tore at him till he was in horrible agony. Then they all kowtowed and pleaded with me, so I spared his life. Now they're bringing a carrying – chair here to take the master over the mountain."

As soon as Sanzang heard this he scrambled to his feet, bowed to Monkey and said, "Disciple, I've put you to enormous trouble. If I had believed what Wuneng said we would have been finished."

"Chaff – guzzling idiot," Monkey said abusively, taking a swing at Pig with his fist, "you're thoroughly lazy and barely human. But don't get upset, Master. The monsters are coming to take you across the mountain."

Friar Sand too felt deeply ashamed, and quickly trying to cover it up he packed up the luggage and loaded the horse to wait on the road.

The story returns to the three demon chiefs, who led their devilish hosts back into the cave. "Elder brother,"

said the second demon, "I'd imagined that Sun the Novice had nine heads and eight tails, but he turns out to be nothing but that pipsqueak of a monkey. You shouldn't have swallowed him. You should have fought him.

He'd have been no match for us. With our tens of thousands of goblins we could have drowned him in our spit. But by swallowing him you let him use his magic and cause you agony, so that you didn't dare have it out with him. When I said we'd take the Tang Priest across the mountains just now I didn't mean it. It was only a way of luring him out because your life was in danger. I most certainly won't escort the Tang Priest."

"Why not, good brother?" the senior demon chief asked.

"If you and I draw up three thousand junior devils ready for battle I can capture that ape," the second demon replied.

"Never mind about three thousand," the senior demon chief said. "You can have our whole force. If we capture him it'll be a credit to us all."

The second demon chief then mustered three thousand junior demons whom he led to a place beside the main road, where they were put into battle formation. He sent a herald with a blue flag to carry a message.

"Sun the Novice," the herald said, "come out at once and fight His Second Majesty."

Chapter 76

1062

Journey to the West

When Pig heard this he said with a laugh, "As the saying goes, brother, liars don't fool the people at home.

You lied to us when you came back, you trickster. You said you'd beaten the evil spirits and that they'd be bringing a carrying – chair to take the master across. But here they are challenging you to battle. Why?"

"The senior demon did surrender to me," Monkey replied, "and he wouldn't dare show his face. The sound of my name alone is enough to give him a headache. The second demon chief must be challenging me to battle because he can't bring himself to escort us across. I tell you, brother, those three evil spirits are brothers and they have a sense of honour. We're three brothers but we don't. I've beaten the senior demon, so the second demon's come out. There's no reason why you shouldn't fight him."

"I'm not scared of him," Pig said. "I'll go and give him a fight."

"If you want to, go ahead," Monkey replied.

"Brother," said Pig with a laugh, "I'll go, but lend me that rope."

"What do you want it for?" Monkey asked. "You don't know how to get into his belly or tie it to his heart, so what use would it be to you?"

"I want it tied round my waist as a lifeline," replied Pig. "You and Friar Sand are to hold on to it and let it out for me to fight him. If you think I'm beating him pay more rope out and I'll capture him, but if he's beating me, pull me back. Don't let him drag me off."

At this Monkey smiled to himself and thought, "Another chance to make a fool of the idiot." Monkey then tied the rope round Pig's waist and sent him off into battle.

The idiot lifted his rake and rushed up the steep slope shouting. "Come out, evil spirit! Come and fight your ancestor Pig!" The herald with the

blue flag rushed back to report, "Your Majesty, there's a monk with a long snout and big ears here." The second demon chief came out of the encampment, saw Pig, and without a word thrust his spear straight at Pig's face. The idiot raised his rake and went forward to parry the blow. The two of them joined battle in front of the mountainside, and before they had fought seven or eight rounds the idiot began to weaken. He was no longer able to hold the evil spirit off.

"Brother," he shouted, turning back in a hurry, "pull in the lifeline, pull in the lifeline!" When the Great Sage heard this from where he stood he loosened his hold on the rope and dropped it. The idiot started to run back now that he was defeated. At first he had not noticed the rope trailing behind him, but after he turned back, relaxing the tension on it, it started to get tangled round his legs. He tripped himself over, climbed to his feet and tripped over again. At first he only staggered, but then he fell facedown into the dust. The evil spirit caught up with him, unwound his trunk that was like a python, wrapped it round Pig and carried him back in triumph to the cave. The devilish host chorused a paean of victory as they swarmed back.

When Sanzang saw all this from the foot of the slope he became angry with Monkey. "Wukong," he said, "no wonder Wuneng wishes you were dead. You brother–disciples don't love each other at all. All you feel is jealousy. He told you to pull in his lifeline, so why didn't you? Why did you drop the rope instead? What are we to do now you have got him killed?"

"You're covering up for him again, Master," said Monkey, "and showing favoritism too. I'm fed up. When I was captured it didn't bother you at all. I was dispensable. But when that idiot gets himself caught you blame me for it. Let him suffer. It'll teach him how hard it is to fetch the scriptures."

Chapter 76

1063

Journey to the West

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "was I not worried when you went? I remembered that you could change into other things, so I was sure you would come to no harm. But the idiot was born clumsy and can't transform himself, which makes this a very dangerous business. You must go and rescue him."

"Stop complaining, Master," said Brother Monkey. "I'll go and save him."

Monkey rushed up the mountain thinking resentfully, "I'm not going to make life easy for that idiot if he wishes me dead. I'll go and see what the evil spirits are doing with him. Before I rescue him I'll let him suffer a bit." He then made magic with his hands, said the words of a spell, shook himself, turned into the tiniest of insects and flew into the cave, where he landed at the bottom of one of Pig's ears to be taken inside with the evil spirit. The second demon chief had led his three thousand junior devils trumpeting and drumming loudly to the cave, where they stopped.

He now took Pig inside and said, "I've got one, elder brother."

"Show me," the senior demon replied.

Unwinding his trunk the second demon chief flung Pig to the ground and said, "There he is."

"That one's useless," said the senior demon.

"Your Majesty," put in Pig when he heard this, "if I'm no use let me go and find a more useful one to capture."

"He may not be any use," said the third demon chief, "but he is the Tang Priest's disciple Zhu Bajie. Tie him up and put him to soak in the pool at the back. When his bristles have been soaked off we can open his belly up, salt him and dry him in the sun. He'll go down well with some wine on a rainy day."

"That's that then," exclaimed Pig in horror. "I've fallen into the clutches of a demon who's a salt–pork peddler." The demon hordes fell on him, tied his hands and feet together, carried him to the pool at the back, pushed him in and went back.

When the Great Sage flew there to have a look he saw the idiot with his four limbs pointing upwards and his snout downwards as he half floated and was half sinking, grunting through his snout. He really was a ridiculous sight, like a big blackened frost–bitten lotus pod that has shed its seeds in September or October.

Seeing his face the Great Sage felt both loathing and pity for him.

"What shall I do?" he wondered. "After all, he is another member of the Dragon Flower Assembly. I just wish he wouldn't keep trying to

divide up the luggage, split our band, and incite the master to say the Band – tightening Spell. The other day I heard Friar Sand say that he'd stashed some money away for himself. I wonder if it's true. I'll give him a scare and find out."

The splendid Great Sage flew down to his ear and called in a disguised voice, "Zhu Wuneng, Zhu Wuneng."

"This is terrible," thought Pig in alarm, "Wuneng is the name the Bodhisattva Guanyin gave me. I've been called Zhu Bajie all the time I've been with the Tang Priest. How can there be anyone here who knows my name is Wuneng?" So he could not restrain himself from asking, "Who's that calling my Buddhist name?"

"Me," said Monkey.

"Who are you?" the idiot asked.

Chapter 76

1064

Journey to the West

"I'm a catcher," Monkey replied.

"Where from, sir?" asked Pig in terror.

"From the Fifth King of the Underworld, and he's sent me to fetch you," said Monkey.

"Then please go back and ask the Fifth King as he's such a good friend of my senior fellow – disciple Sun Wukong to give me a day's grace. You can come for me tomorrow."

"You're talking nonsense," Monkey replied. "If King Yama of Hell decides you're to die in the third watch nobody will keep you till the fourth. Come with me at once if you don't want me to put a rope round your neck and drag you off."

"Do me a favour," said the idiot. "Even with a face like mine still want to go on living. I'll certainly die if I have to, but give me a day till these evil spirits have captured my master and the rest of us, so I can see them again before we're all done for."

"Very well then," said Monkey, grinning to himself. "I've got about thirty people to capture around here in this batch. When I've caught

them I'll come back for you. That'll give you a day's grace. Give me some money. I'm sure you've got some."

"Oh dear," said Pig, "we monks don't have money."

"If you haven't then I'm dragging you off," said Brother Monkey. "Come with me."

"Don't be so impatient, sir," said the idiot, panicking. "I know that rope of yours is what they call the life – taking rope. Once It's round you you're dead. Yes, I have got some money. I've got a bit, but not much."

"Where is it?" Monkey demanded. "Give it me at once."

"Oh dear, what a pity!" said Pig. "From when I became a monk right up till now the kind people who feed monks have given me a bit more alms than the others because my belly's so big. I saved all the little bits of silver till I had about half an ounce. They were awkward to keep, so when we were in a city some time ago I asked a silversmith to melt them all together. The wicked man stole a few grains of it, so the ingot he made only weighed forty – six hundredths of an ounce. Take it."

"The idiot hasn't even got his trousers on," grinned Monkey to himself, "so where can he have hidden it? Hey, where's your silver?"

"It's stuffed inside my left ear," Pig replied. "I can't get it myself because I'm tied up, so take it out yourself."

When Monkey heard this he put his hand out and took the silver from inside Pig's ear. It was indeed an ingot shaped like a saddle that weighed only forty – five or forty – six hundredths of an ounce. As he held it in his hands Monkey could not help roaring with laughter.

Recognizing Monkey's voice the idiot started cursing him wildly from the water: "Damn and blast you, Protector of the Horses, for coming to extort money from me when I'm in such misery."

"I've got you now, you dreg – guzzler!" said Monkey. "Goodness only knows what I've had to suffer for the sake of protecting the master, while you've been making your fortune."

Chapter 76

"Nonsense!" Pig retorted. "Call this a fortune? It's just what I've scraped off my teeth. I resisted spending it on my stomach, so I saved it to buy myself some cloth to get a tunic made. You've got it out of me by intimidation. You ought to share it with me."

"You won't get a cent of it," Monkey replied.

"I've paid you to spare my life," said Pig, "so now you damn well ought to rescue me."

"Don't be so impatient," said Monkey. "I'll rescue you all in good time." Putting the silver away he turned back into himself and used his cudgel to bring Pig close enough to grab him by his feet, drag him ashore and untie him. Pig then sprang up, took off his clothes, wrung them out, shook them, and draped them still dripping wet over his shoulders.

"Brother," he said, "open the back gates. Let's go."

"There's no glory in sneaking out the back way," replied Monkey. "We'll leave by the front gates."

"My feet are still numb after being tied up," said Pig. "I can't run."

"Buck up and come with me," said Monkey.

The splendid Great Sage charged out, clearing his way by swinging his cudgel. The idiot had no choice but to endure the pain and keep close to him. When he saw the rake propped up by the second pair of gates he went over to it, pushed the junior devils aside, retrieved it and rushed forward, lashing out wildly. He and Brother Monkey charged through three or four pairs of gates, and goodness only knows how many junior devils they killed.

When the senior demon chief heard all this he said to the second chief, "You captured a fine one! A fine one indeed! Look! Sun the Novice has rescued Pig and they've wounded or killed the juniors on the gates." The second demon at once sprang to his feet and rushed out through the gates brandishing his spear.

"Damned macaque," he shouted at the top of his voice. "What a nerve! How dare you treat us with such contempt!" As soon as the Great Sage heard this he stopped still. The monster thrust his spear straight at him without allowing any argument. With the unhurried skill of the

expert Monkey raised his iron cudgel to hit back at the demon's face. The two of them fought a splendid battle outside the entrance to the cave: The yellow – tusked elephant in human form

Had sworn brotherhood with the Lion King.

Persuaded by the senior monster

They plotted together to eat the Tang Priest.

Huge were the powers of the Great Sage, Heaven's equal,

Who helped the good against the bad and killed off demons,

The incompetent Pig had met with disaster,

Chapter 76

1066

Journey to the West

So Monkey saved him and led him outside.

When the demon king pursued them with great ferocity

The spear and the cudgel each showed off its powers.

The spear moved like a snake in the woods;

The cudgel arose like a dragon from the sea.

Where the dragon emerged the clouds were thick;

Dense hung the mist where the snake went through the woods.

It was all for the sake of the Tang Priest

That they fought each other with ferocity and hatred.

When he saw the Great Sage start fighting the evil spirit, Pig stood on the spur, his rake upright. Instead of joining in to help, he watched with stupefied amazement. Monkey's cudgel was so powerful and his martial skills so faultless the evil spirit used his spear to parry Monkey's blows while unrolling his trunk to wrap round him. As Monkey knew about this trick he held his gold – banded cudgel out horizontally in both hands and raised them. The evil spirit's trunk

caught Monkey round the waist but missed his hands. Just watch how Monkey belabors the evil spirit's trunk with his cudgel.

When Pig saw this he beat his chest and said, "Oh dear! That monster's got lousy luck. When he caught me he got my arms too because I'm so clumsy, but he didn't when he caught that slippery character. He's got his cudgel in both hands, and all he needs to do is shove it up the monster's trunk to give him such a pain in the nostrils that it'll make the snot run. The monster'll never be able to hold him."

Monkey had not thought of this before Pig gave him the idea, but now he waved his cudgel to make it as thick as a hen's egg and over ten feet long and actually did shove it hard up the monster's trunk. This gave the evil spirit such a shock that he unraveled his trunk with a swishing noise. Monkey brought his hand round to grab the trunk and drag it forcefully towards him. To spare himself any more agony the monster stepped out and moved with Monkey's hand. Only then did Pig dare approach, raising his rake to hit wildly at the monster's flanks.

"No," said Brother Monkey, "that's no good. The prongs of your rake are so sharp they might break his skin. If he starts bleeding heavily and the master sees it he'll say we've been killing again. You'd better turn it round and hit him with the handle."

The idiot then raised the handle of his rake and struck the monster at every step while Monkey dragged him by the trunk. They looked like a pair of elephant boys as they led him down to the foot of the mountain, where Sanzang could be seen gazing with concentration at the two of them coming noisily towards him.

"Wujing," he said to Friar Sand, "what is it Wukong is leading?"

"Master," replied Friar Sand when he saw them, "big brother is dragging an evil spirit here by the nose. He really enjoys slaughter."

"Splendid, splendid," said Sanzang. "What a big evil spirit, and what a long nose! Go and ask him if he's happy and willing to escort us over the—mountain. If he is he must be spared and not be killed."

Friar Sand at once rushed straight towards them shouting, "The master says you mustn't kill the monster if he's really willing to escort him across the mountain." As soon as he heard this the demon fell to his knees and promised to do so in a very nasal voice. His voice was like this because Monkey was pinching his nostrils shut, making it sound as though he had a heavy cold.

"Lord Tang," he said, "I'll carry you across by chair if you spare my life."

"My master and we disciples are good people." Monkey replied. "As you've said this we'll spare your life.

Fetch the chair at once. If you break your word again we most certainly won't spare your life when we catch you next time." The freed monster kowtowed and left. Monkey and Pig went to report to the Tang Priest on everything that had happened to them. Pig was overcome with shame as he spread his clothes out to dry in the sun while they waited.

The second demon chief returned trembling and shaking to the cave. Even before his return some junior devils had reported to the senior and the third demon chiefs that Monkey had dragged him off by the trunk. In his anxiety the senior demon had led his hosts out with the third demon when they saw the second chief coming back alone. As they brought him inside and asked him why he had been released the second chief told them all about Sanzang's words of mercy and goodness. They looked at each other, at a loss for words.

"Elder brother," said the second demon chief, "shall we take Sanzang across?"

"What a thing to say, brother," replied the senior chief. "Sun the Novice is a monkey who shows the greatest benevolence and sense of justice. If he had wanted to kill me when he was in my stomach he could most certainly have done so. He only grabbed your trunk. He might have dragged you off and not let you go. All he did was to pinch your trunk and break its skin, and that's given you a scare. Get ready at once to take them across."

The third demon chief smiled and said, "Yes, yes, yes!"

"From the way you're talking, my good brother," said the senior demon, "it sounds as though you're reluctant to let the Tang Priest go. If you don't, we'll take him across."

The third demon chief smiled again and said, "Elder brothers, it would have been luckier for those monks if they hadn't asked us to escort them but had slipped quietly across instead. By asking us to escort them they've fallen in with our plan to lure the tiger down from the mountain."

"What do you mean by 'luring the tiger from the mountain?'" the senior demon asked.

"Summon all the demons in our cave," the third demon chief continued. "Choose one thousand from the ten thousand of them, then a hundred from the thousand, then sixteen and thirty from the hundred."

"Why do you want sixteen and thirty?" the senior demon asked.

"The thirty must be good cooks," the third demon chief replied. "Give them the best rice and flour, bamboo shoots, tea, gill fungus, button mushrooms, beancurd and wheat gluten. Send them to put up a shelter seven to ten miles along the way and lay on a meal for the Tang Priest."

Chapter 76

1068

Journey to the West

"And what do you want the sixteen for?" the senior demon asked.

"Eight to carry the chair and eight to shout and clear the way," the third demon replied. "We brothers will accompany them for a stage of their journey. About 150 miles West of here is my city, and I've plenty of troops there to greet them. When they get to the city we'll do such and such and so on... The Tang Priest and his disciples won't be able to see what's happening to them. Whether we catch the Tang Priest or not depends completely on those sixteen demons."

The senior demon was beside himself with delight on hearing this. It was as if he had recovered from a drunken stupor or woken up from a dream. "Excellent, excellent," he said, whereupon he mustered the demons, chose thirty to whom he gave the food and another sixteen to carry a rattan chair. As they set out the senior demon gave the following instructions to the rest of the demons: "None of you are to go out on the mountain. Sun the Novice is a very cautious ape, and if he sees any of you around he'll be suspicious and see through our

plan."

The senior demon then led his underlings to a place beside the main road, where he called aloud, "Lord Tang, today's not an unlucky one, so please come across the mountain straight away."

"Who is that calling me, Wukong?" Sanzang asked when he heard this.

"It's the demons I beat," Monkey replied. "They're bringing a chair to carry you."

Putting his hands together in front of his chest Sanzang looked up to the sky and said, "Splendid, splendid!

But for my worthy disciple's great abilities I could not proceed on my journey." He then walked forward to greet the demons with the words, "I am most grateful for the consideration you gentlemen are showing. When my disciples and I return to Chang'an we will praise your admirable achievements."

"Please get into the carrying–chair, my lord," the demons said, kowtowing. Having mortal eyes and body Sanzang did not realize that this was a trick. The Great Sage Sun, a golden immortal of the Supreme Monad with a loyal nature, thought that because he had captured and released the demons they were now won over.

He never imagined that they had other plots in mind, so he did not investigate closely but went along with his master's ideas. He told Pig to tie the luggage on the horse and keep close to the master with Friar Sand while he cleared the way with his iron cudgel, watching out to see if all was well. While eight devils carried the chair and eight shouted in turn to clear the way the three demon chiefs steadied the poles of the chair. The master was delighted to sit upright in it and go up the high mountain by the main track, little realizing that Great grief would return in the midst of rejoicing;

"Extremes," says the classic, "create their negation."

Fated they were to meet with disaster,

A star of ill–omen to mark desolation.

The band of demons worked with one mind to escort them and serve them diligently at all times. After ten miles there was a vegetarian meal and after fifteen more miles another one. They were invited to rest before it grew late, and everything along their way was neat and

tidy. Each day they had three most satisfactory and Chapter 76

delightful meals and spent a comfortable night where they were able to sleep well.

When they had traveled about 150 miles West they found themselves near a walled city. Raising his iron cudgel the Great Sage, who was only a third of a mile ahead of the carrying – chair, was so alarmed by the sight of the city that he fell over and was unable to rise to his feet. Do you know why someone of his great courage was so frightened by what he saw? It was because he saw a very evil atmosphere hanging over the town.

Crowds of evil demons and monsters,

Wolf spirits at all four gates.

Striped tigers are the commanders;

White – faced tiger – cats are senior officers.

Antlered stags carry documents around;

Cunning foxes walk along the streets.

Thousand – foot pythons slither round the walls;

Twenty – mile serpents occupy the roads.

At the base of high towers gray wolves shout commands;

Leopards speak in human voices by pavilions.

Standard – bearers and drummers – – all are monsters;

Mountain spirits patrol and stand sentry;

Crafty hares open shops to trade;

Wild boars carry their loads to do business.

What used to be the capital of a heavenly dynasty

Has now become a city of wolves and tigers.

Just as he was being overcome by terror the Great Sage heard a wind from behind him and turned quickly to see the third demon chief raising a heaven–square halberd with a patterned handle to strike at his head.

Springing to his feet, the Great Sage struck back at the monster's face with his gold–banded cudgel. Both of them were snorting with rage and fury as they ground their teeth and fought a wordless struggle. Monkey then saw the senior demon chief giving out orders as he lifted his steel saber to hack at Pig. Pig was in such a rush that he had to let the horse go as he swung his rake around to hit wildly back. Meanwhile the second demon chief was thrusting with his spear at Friar Sand, who parried with his demon–quelling staff.

Chapter 76

1070

Journey to the West

The three demon chiefs and the three monks were now all fighting in single combat, ready to throw away their lives. The sixteen junior devils obeyed their orders, each giving play to his talents as they grabbed hold of the white horse and the luggage and crowded round Sanzang, lifting up his chair and carrying him straight to the city.

"Your Senior Majesty, please decide what to do now we've captured the Tang Priest," they shouted. All the demons of every rank on the city walls came rushing down to throw the city gates wide open. Every battalion was ordered to furl its flag, silence its drums, and on no account shout war–cries or strike gongs.

"His Senior Majesty has given orders that the Tang Priest is not to be frightened. He can't endure being scared. If he is, his flesh will turn sour and be inedible." The demons were all delighted to welcome Sanzang, bowing and carrying him into the throne hall of the palace, where he was invited to sit in the place of honour.

They offered him tea and food as they bustled around him in attendance. The venerable elder felt dizzy and confused as he looked about and saw no familiar faces.

If you don't know whether he was to escape with his life listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 77

The Demon Host Mistreats the Fundamental Nature

The One Body Pays His Respects to the Buddha

We will tell now not of the sufferings of the venerable Tang Elder but of the three demon chiefs in strenuous combat with the Great Sage and his two brother disciples in the low hills to the East outside the city. It was indeed a good hard battle, like an iron brush against a copper pan: Six types of body, six types of weapon,

Six physical forms, six feelings.

The six evils arise from the six sense organs and the six desires; The six gates to nirvana and the six ways of rebirth are struggling for victory.

In the thirty – six divine palaces spring comes of itself;

The six times six forms do not want to be named.

This one holding a gold – banded cudgel

Performs a thousand movements;

That one wielding a heaven – square halberd

Is exceptional in every way.

Pig is even more ferocious with his rake;

The second demon's spear – play is superb and effective.

There is nothing commonplace about young Friar Sand's staff

As he tries to inflict a blow that is fatal;

Sharp is the senior demon's saber

Which he raises without mercy.

These three are the true priest's invincible escorts;

The other three are evil and rebellious spirits.

At first the fight is not so bad,

But later it becomes more murderous.

All six weapons rise up by magic

To twist and turn in the clouds above.

They belch out in an instant clouds that darken the sky,

And the only sounds to be heard are roars and bellows.

After the six of them had been fighting for a long time evening was drawing in, and as the wind was also bringing clouds it became dark very quickly. Pig was finding it harder and harder to see as his big ears were covering his eyelids. His hands and feet were besides too slow for him to be able to hold off his opponent, so he fled from the fight, dragging his rake behind him. The senior demon chief took a swing at him with his sword that almost killed him. Luckily Pig moved his head out of the way, so that the blade only cut off a few of his bristles. The monster then caught up with Pig, opened his jaws, picked Pig up by the collar, carried him into the city and threw him to the junior demons to tie up and take to the throne hall. The senior demon chief then rose back into the air by cloud to help the other two.

Seeing that things were going badly Friar Sand feinted with his staff and turned to flee only to be caught, hands and all, when the second demon unraveled his trunk and noisily wrapped it round him. The demon took him too into the city, ordering the junior demons to tie him up in the palace before rising up into the sky again to tell the others how to catch Monkey. Seeing that both his brother disciples had been captured Monkey realized that it was going to be impossible for him to hold out single—handed. Indeed: A couple of fists can defeat a good hand,

But cannot a competent foursome withstand.

Chapter 77

1072

Journey to the West

With a shout Brother Monkey pushed the three demons' weapons

aside, set off his somersault cloud and fled.

When the third demon chief saw Monkey ride off by somersault he shook himself, resumed his real form, spread his wings and caught up with the Great Sage. You may well ask how the demon could possibly catch up with him. When Monkey made havoc in heaven all that time ago a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers had failed to capture him. Because he could cover 36,000 miles in a single somersault of his cloud, none of the gods had been able to catch up with him. But this evil spirit could cover 30,000 miles with one beat of his wings, so that with two beats he caught up with Monkey and seized him. Monkey could not get out of the demon's talons no matter how hard he struggled or how desperately he longed to escape. Even when he used his transformation magic he still could not move. If he made himself grow the demon opened his grip but still held firmly to him; and if he shrank the demon tightened his clutch. The demon took him back inside the city, released his talons, dropped him into the dust, and told the fiendish hordes to tie him up and put him with Pig and Friar Sand. The senior and the second demon chiefs both came out to greet the third chief, who went back up into the throne hall with them. Alas! This time they were not tying Monkey up but sending him on his way.

It was now the second watch of the night, and after all the demons had exchanged greetings the Tang Priest was pushed out of the throne hall. When he suddenly caught sight in the lamplight of his three disciples all lying tied up on the ground the venerable master leaned down beside Brother Monkey and said through his tears, "Disciple, when we meet with trouble you normally go off and use your magic powers to subdue the monsters causing it. Now that you too have been captured can I survive, poor monk that I am?" As soon as Pig and Friar Sand heard their master's distress they too began to howl together.

"Don't worry, Master," said Monkey with a hint of a smile, "and don't cry, brothers. No matter what they do they won't be able to hurt us. When the demon chiefs have settled and are asleep we can be on our way."

"You're just making trouble again, brother," replied Pig. "We're trussed up with hempen ropes. If we do manage to work them a bit loose they spurt water on them to shrink them again. You might be too skinny to notice, but fat old me's having a terrible time. If you don't believe me take a look at my arms. The rope's cut two inches deep into them. I'd never get away."

"Never mind hempen ropes," said Monkey with a laugh, "even if they

were coconut cables as thick as a rice – bowl they'd be no more than an autumn breeze to me. What's there to make a fuss about?"

As master and disciples were talking the senior demon could be heard saying, "Third brother, you really are strong and wise. Your plan to capture the Tang Priest was brilliant and it worked."

"Little ones," he called, "Five of you carry water, seven scrub the pans, ten get the fire burning and twenty fetch the iron steamer. When we've steamed the four monks tender for my brothers and me to enjoy we'll give you juniors a piece so that you can all live for ever."

"Brother," said Pig, trembling, when he this, "listen. That evil spirit's planning to steam and eat us."

"Don't be afraid," said Monkey. "I'm going to find out whether he's an evil spirit still wet behind the ears or an old hand."

"Brother," said Friar Sand, sobbing, "don't talk so big. We're next door to the king of Hell. How can you talk about whether he's wet behind the ears or an old hand at a time like this?" The words were not all out of his mouth before the second demon chief was heard to say, "Pig won't steam well."

"Amitabha Buddha!" said Pig with delight. "I wonder who's building up good karma by saying I won't steam well."

Chapter 77

"If he won't steam well," the third chief said, "skin him before steaming him." This panicked Pig, who screamed at the top of his voice, "Don't skin me. I may be coarse but I'll go tender if you boil me."

"If he won't steam well," the senior demon chief said, "put him on the bottom tray of the steamer."

"Don't worry, Pig," said Monkey with a laugh, "he's wet behind the ears. He's no old hand."

"How can you tell?" Friar Sand asked.

"Generally speaking you should start from the top when steaming,"

Monkey replied. "Whatever's hardest to steam should be put on the top tray. Add a bit of extra fuel to the fire, get up a good steam and it'll be done.

But put it at the bottom and lower the steam and you won't get the steam up even if you cook it for six months.

He must be wet behind the ears if he says that Pig should be put on the bottom tray because he's hard to cook."

"Brother," Pig replied, "if he followed your advice I'd be slaughtered alive. When he can't see the steam rising he'll take the lid off, turn me over and make the fire burn hotter. I'll be cooked on both sides and half done in the middle."

As they were talking a junior devil came in to report that the water was boiling. The senior chief ordered that the monks be carried in, and all the demons acted together to carry Pig to the lowest shelf of the steamer and Friar Sand to the second shelf.

Guessing that they would be coming for him next Brother Monkey freed himself and said, "This lamplight is just right for some action." He then pulled out a hair, blew on it with magic breath, called, "Change!" and turned it into another Monkey he tied up with the hempen rope while extracting his real self in spirit form to spring into mid-air, look down and watch. Not realizing his deception, the crowd of demons picked up the false Monkey they saw and carried him to the third tray of the steamer, near the top. Only then did they drag the Tang Priest to the ground, tie him up, and put him into the fourth tray. As the dry firewood was stacked up a fierce fire blazed.

"My Pig and Friar Sand can stand a couple of boilings," sighed the Great Sage up in the clouds, "but that master of mine will be cooked tender as soon as the water boils. If I can't save him by magic he'll be dead in next to no time."

The splendid Great Sage made a hand-spell in mid-air, said the magic words " *Om* the blue pure dharma world; true is the eternal beneficence of Heaven," and summoned the Dragon King of the Northern Ocean to him.

A black cloud appeared among the other clouds, and from it there came at once an answering shout, "Ao Shun, the humble dragon of the Northern Ocean, kowtows in homage."

"Arise, arise," said Monkey. "I would not have ventured to trouble you

for nothing. I've now got this far with my master the Tang Priest. He's been captured by vicious monsters and put into an iron steamer to be cooked.

Go and protect him for me and don't let the steam harm him." The dragon king at once turned himself into a cold wind that blew underneath the cooking pot and coiled around to shield it from all the heat of the fire.

Thus were the three of them saved from death.

As the third watch was drawing to an end the senior demon chief announced a decision. "My men," he said,

"we have worn out brains and brawn to capture the Tang Priest and his three disciples. Because of the trouble we went to in escorting them we have not slept for four days and nights. I don't think that they'll be able to escape now that they're tied up and being steamed. You are all to guard them carefully. Ten of your junior Chapter 77

devils are to take it in turns to keep the fires burning while we withdraw to our living quarters for a little rest.

By the fifth watch, when it's about to get light, they're bound to be cooked tender. Have some garlic paste, salt and vinegar ready and wake us up; then we'll be able to eat them with a good appetite." The devils did as they had been ordered while the three demon chiefs returned to their sleeping chambers.

Up in the clouds Brother Monkey clearly heard these instructions being given, so he brought his cloud down.

As there was no sound of voices from inside the steamer he thought, "The fire is blazing away and they must be feeling hot. Why aren't they afraid? Why aren't they saying anything? Hmm... Could they have been steamed to death? Let me go closer and listen." The splendid Great Sage shook himself as he stood on his cloud and turned into a black fly. As he alighted on the outside of the iron steamer's trays to listen he heard Pig saying inside, "What lousy luck! What lousy luck! I wonder whether we're being closed—steamed or open—steamed."

"What do you mean by 'closed' and 'open,' brother?" Friar Sand asked.

"Closed steaming is when they cover the steamer and open steaming is when they don't," Pig replied.

"Disciples," said Sanzang from the top tray, "the cover is off."

"We're in luck!" said Pig. "We won't be killed tonight. We're being open—steamed." Having heard all three of them talking Monkey realized that they were still alive, so he flew away, fetched the iron steamer lid and placed it lightly on the steamer.

"Disciples," exclaimed Sanzang in alarm, "they've covered us up."

"That's done it," said Pig.

"That means closed steaming. We're bound to die tonight." Friar Sand and the venerable elder started to sob.

"Don't cry," said Pig. "A new shift of cooks has come on duty."

"How can you tell?" Friar Sand asked.

"I was delighted at first when they carried me here," Pig replied. "I've got a bit of a feverish chill and I wanted warming up. But all we're getting at the moment is cold air. Hey! Mr. Cook, sir! What are you making such a fuss about putting more firewood on for? Am I asking for what's yours?"

When Monkey heard this he could not help laughing to himself. "Stupid clod," he thought. "Being cold is bearable. If it got hot you'd be dead. The secret will get out if he goes on talking. I'd better rescue him.... No!

I'd have to turn back into myself to rescue them, and if I did that the ten cooks would see me and start shouting. That would disturb the old monsters and I'd be put to a lot more trouble. I'll have to use some magic on the cooks first." Then a memory came back to him.

"When I was the Great Sage in the old days I once played a guessing game with the Heavenly King Lokapala at the Northern Gate of Heaven and won some of his sleep insects off him. I've got a few left I can use on them." He felt around his waist inside his belt and found that he had twelve of them left.

"I'll give them ten and keep two to breed from," Monkey thought. Then

he threw the insects into the ten junior devils' faces, where the insects went up their nostrils, so that they all started feeling drowsy, lay down and went to sleep. One of them, however, who was holding a fire – fork slept very fitfully, kept rubbing his head and face, pinching his nose and continuously sneezing. "That so – and – so knows a trick or two," thought Chapter 77

Monkey. "I'll have to give him a double dose." He threw one of his remaining insects into the demon's face.

"With two insects the left one can go in when the right one comes out and vice versa," Monkey thought. "That should keep him quiet." With that the junior demon gave two or three big yawns, stretched himself, dropped the fork and slumped down, fast asleep. He did not get up again.

"What marvellous magic; it really works," said Monkey, turning back into himself. Then he went close to the steamer and called, "Master."

"Rescue me, Wukong," said the Tang Priest when he heard him.

"Is that you calling to us from outside?" Friar Sand asked.

"If I weren't out here would you prefer me to be suffering in there with you?" Monkey replied.

"Brother," said Pig, "you slipped off and left us to carry the can. We're being closed – steamed in here."

"Stop yelling, idiot," said Monkey with a laugh. "I'm here to rescue you."

"Brother," said Pig, "if you're going to rescue us do it properly. Don't get us put back in here for another steaming." Monkey then took the lid off, freed the master, shook the hair of his that he had turned into an imitation Monkey and put it back on his body, then released Friar Sand and Pig, taking one tray at a time. As soon as he was untied, the idiot wanted to run away.

"Don't be in such a hurry!" said Monkey, who recited the words of a spell that released the dragon before going on to say to Pig, "We've still got high mountains and steep ridges ahead of us on our way to

the Western Heaven. The going's too heavy for the master – –he isn't a strong walker. Wait till I've fetched the horse."

Watch him as with light step he goes to the throne hall, where he saw that all the demons young and old were asleep. He undid the rope attached to the horse's reins, being even more careful not to alarm him. Now the horse was a dragon horse, so had Monkey been a stranger he would have given him a couple of flying kicks and whinnied. But Monkey had kept horses and held the office of Protector of the Horses, and this horse was besides their own. That was why the animal neither reared nor whinnied. Monkey led the horse very quietly over, tightened the girth and got everything ready before inviting his master to mount. Trembling and shaking, the Tang Priest did so. He too wanted to go.

"Don't you be in such a hurry either," Monkey said. "There'll be plenty more kings along our journey West and we'll need our passport if we're to get there. What other identity papers do we have? I'm going back to find the luggage."

"I remember that when we came in the monsters put the luggage to the left of the throne hall," said the Tang Priest. "The loads must still be there."

"Understood," said Monkey, who sprang off at once to search for it by the throne hall. When he suddenly saw shimmering lights of many colours Brother Monkey knew that they came from the luggage. How did he know? Because the light came from the night–shining pearl on the Tang Priest's cassock. He rushed towards it and found that their load was unopened, so he took it out and gave it to Friar Sand to carry. While Pig guided the horse, the Great Sage took the lead.

They were hurrying to go straight out through the main Southern gate when they heard the noise of watchmen's clappers and bells. They found the gates locked and paper seals over the locks.

Chapter 77

1076

Journey to the West

"How are we going to get out if the place is so closely guarded?" Monkey wondered.

"Let's get out the back door," said Pig. With Monkey leading the way

they rushed straight to the back gates.

"I can hear clappers and bells outside the back gates as well, and they're sealed too," Monkey said. "What are we to do? If it weren't for the Tang Priest's mortal body it wouldn't bother us three: we could get away by cloud and wind. But the Tang Priest hasn't escaped from the Three Worlds and is still confined within the Five Elements. All his bones are the unclean ones he got from his mother and father. He can't lift himself into the air and he'll never get away."

"No time for talking now, brother," said Pig: "Let's go somewhere where there aren't any bells, clappers or guards, lift the master up and climb over the wall."

"That won't do," said Monkey. "We could lift him over now because we've got to, but you've got such a big mouth you'd tell people everywhere when we're taking the scriptures back that we're the sort of monks who sneak over people's walls."

"But we can't bother about behaving properly now," replied Pig. "We've got to save our skins." Monkey had no choice but to do as he suggested, so they went up to wall and worked out how to climb over.

Oh dear! Things would have to work out this way: Sanzang was not yet free of his unlucky star. The three demon chiefs who had been fast asleep in their living quarters suddenly awoke and, fearing that the Tang Priest had escaped, got up, threw on their clothes and hurried to the throne hall of the palace.

"How many times has the Tang Priest been steamed?" they asked. The junior devils who were looking after the fires were all so soundly asleep because the sleep insects were in them that not even blows could wake them up.

The chiefs woke up some others who were not on duty, who answered rashly, "Ss...ss...seven times." Then they rushed over to the steamer to see the steamer trays lying scattered on the floor and the cooks still asleep.

In their alarm they rushed back to report, "Your Majesties, th...th...they've escaped."

The three demon chiefs came out of the throne hall to take a close look around the cauldron. They saw that the steamer trays were indeed scattered on the floor, the water was stonecold and the fire completely out. The cooks supposed to be tending the fire were still so

fast asleep that they were snoring noisily.

The fiends were all so shocked that they all shouted, "Catch the Tang Priest! At once! Catch the Tang Priest!"

Their yells woke up the demons senior and junior all around. They rushed in a crowd to the main front gates carrying their swords and spears.

Seeing that the sealed locks had not been touched and that the night watchmen were still sounding their clappers and bells they asked the watchman, "Which way did the Tang Priest go?"

"Nobody's come out," the watchmen all replied. They hurried to the back gates of the palace, only to find that the seals, locks, clappers and bells were the same as at the front. With a great commotion they grabbed lanterns and torches, making the sky red and the place as bright as day. The four of them were clearly lit up as they climbed over the wall.

"Where do you think you're going?" the senior demon chief shouted, running towards them and so terrifying the reverend gentleman that the muscles in his legs turned soft and numb and he fell off the wall to be Chapter 77

captured by the senior demon. The second demon chief seized Friar Sand and the third knocked Pig over and captured him. The other demons took the luggage and the white horse. Only Monkey escaped.

"May Heaven kill him," Pig grumbled under his breath about Monkey. "I said that if he was going to rescue us he ought to do a thorough job of it. As it is we're going to be put back in the steamer for another steaming."

The monsters took the Tang Priest into the throne hall but did not steam him again. The second demon chief ordered that Pig was to be tied to one of the columns supporting the eaves in front of the hall and the third chief had Friar Sand tied to one of the columns holding up the eaves at the back. The senior chief clung to the Tang Priest and would not let go of him.

"What are you holding him for, elder brother?" the third demon asked.

"Surely you're not going to eat him alive. That wouldn't be at all interesting. He's no ordinary idiot to be gobbled up just to fill your stomach. He's a rare delicacy from a superior country. We should keep him till we have some free time one rainy day, then bring him out to be carefully cooked and enjoyed with drinking games and fine music."

"A very good suggestion, brother," replied the senior demon with a smile, "but Sun the Novice would come and steal him again."

"In our palace we have a Brocade Fragrance Pavilion," said the third demon, "and in the pavilion is an iron chest. I think we should put the Tang Priest into the chest, shut up the pavilion, put out a rumour that we have already eaten him half raw and get all the junior devils in the city talking about it. That Sun the Novice is bound to come back to find out what's happening, and when he hears this he'll be so miserably disappointed that he'll go away. If he doesn't come to make trouble for another four or five days we can bring the Tang Priest out to enjoy at our leisure. What do you think?"

The senior and second demon chiefs were both delighted. "Yes, yes, you're right, brother," they said. That very night the poor Tang Priest was taken inside the palace, put into the chest and locked up in the pavilion.

We will not tell how the rumour was spread and became the talk of the town.

Instead the story tells how Monkey escaped that night by cloud, unable to look after the Tang Priest. He went straight to Lion Cave where he wiped out all the tens of thousands of junior demons with his cudgel to his complete satisfaction. By the time he had hurried back to the city the sun was rising in the East. He did not dare challenge the demons to battle because

No thread can be spun from a single strand;

Nobody can clap with a single hand.

So he brought his cloud down, shook himself, turned himself into a junior demon and slipped in through the gates to collect news in the streets and back alleys. "The Tang Priest was eaten raw by the senior king during the night," was what all the people in the city were saying wherever he went. This made Brother Monkey really anxious. When he went to look at the throne hall in the palace he saw that there were many spirits constantly coming and going. They were wearing leather and metal helmets and yellow cotton tunics. In their hands they held

red lacquered staves, and ivory passes hung at their waists.

Chapter 77

1078

Journey to the West

"These must be evil spirits who are allowed in the inner quarters of the palace," thought Monkey. "I'll turn myself into one, go in and see what I can find out."

The splendid Great Sage then made himself identical to the demons and slipped in through the inner gates of the palace. As he was walking along he saw Pig tied to one of the columns of the throne hall, groaning.

"Wuneng," Monkey said, going up to him.

"Is that you, brother?" asked the idiot, recognizing his voice. "Save me!"

"I'll save you," said Monkey. "Do you know where the master is?"

"He's done for," Pig replied. "The evil spirits ate him raw last night." At this Monkey burst into sobs and the tears gushed out like water from a spring.

"Don't cry, brother," said Pig. "I've only heard the junior devils gossiping. I didn't see it with my own eyes.

Don't waste any more time. Go on and find out more." Only then did Monkey dry his tears and go to search in the inner part of the palace.

Noticing Friar Sand tied to a column at the back of the palace he went up to him, felt his chest and said,

"Wujing."

Friar Sand also recognized his voice and said, "Brother, is that you here in disguise? Save me! Save me!"

"Saving you will be easy," said Monkey, "but do you know where the master is?"

"Brother!" said Friar Sand in tears. "The evil spirits couldn't even wait to steam the master. They've eaten him raw."

Now that both of them had told him the same story the Great Sage was cut to the heart. Instead of rescuing Pig and Friar Sand he sprang straight up into the sky and went to the mountain East of the city, where he landed his cloud and let himself weep aloud.

"Poor Master," he said:

"I fought against heaven, was caught in its net,

Till you came along and delivered me, Master.

It became my ambition to worship the Buddha;

I strove to eliminate fiendish disaster.

"I never imagined that now you'd be murdered

And I would have failed on your journey to keep you.

Chapter 77

1079

Journey to the West

The lands of the West were too good for your fate.

Your life's at an end: in what way can I help you?"

Deep in misery, Monkey said to himself, "It's all the fault of our Buddha, the Tathagata, who had nothing better to do in his paradise than make the three stores of scriptures. If he really wanted to convert people to be good he ought to have sent them to the East himself. Then they would have been passed on for ever. But he couldn't bring himself to part with them. He had to make us go to fetch them. Who'd ever have thought that after all the trouble of crossing a thousand mountains the master would lose his life here today? Oh well! I'll ride my somersault cloud to see the Tathagata Buddha and tell him what's happened. If he's willing to give me the scriptures to deliver to the East then the good achievement will be propagated and we'll be able to fulfil our vow. If he won't give me them I'll get him to recite the Band—loosening Spell. Then I can take the band off, return it to him and go back to my own cave to play the king and enjoy myself again."

The splendid Great Sage jumped to his feet and went straight to India on his somersault cloud. In less than a couple of hours he could see the Vulture Peak in the near distance, and an instant later he had

landed his cloud and was heading straight for the foot of the peak. He looked up and saw the four vajrapanis blocking his way and asking him where he was going.

"There's something I want to see the Tathagata about," Monkey replied with a bow.

Next he was faced by the Vajrapani Yongzhu, the indestructible king of Golden Glow Ridge on Mount Kunlun, who shouted, "Macaque, you're an outrage! When the Bull Demon King was giving you such terrible trouble we all helped you, but now you've come to see us today you're showing no manners at all. If you're here on business you should submit a memorial first and wait till you're summoned before going any further.

This isn't like the Southern Gate of Heaven, where you can come and go as you please. Clear off! Out of the way!"

Being told off like this when he was feeling so depressed drove Monkey into thundering roars of fury, and his uncontrollable shouts and yells soon disturbed the Tathagata.

The Tathagata Buddha was sitting on his nine—level lotus throne expounding the sutras to his eighteen arhats when he said, "Sun Wukong is here. You must all go out to receive him." In obedience to the Buddha's command the arhats went out in two columns with their banners and canopies.

"Great Sage Sun," they said in greeting, "the Tathagata has commanded us to summon you to his presence."

Only then did the four vajrapanis at the monastery gates step aside to let Monkey enter. The arhats led him to the foot of the lotus throne, where he went down to kowtow on seeing the Tathagata. He was sobbing and weeping.

"Wukong," said the Buddha, "what makes you weep so miserably?"

"Your disciple has often received the grace of your instruction," Brother Monkey replied, "and has committed himself to the school of Lord Buddha. Since being converted to the true achievement I have taken the Tang Priest as my master and been protecting him on our journey. No words could describe what we have suffered.

We have now reached the city of Leonia near Lion Cave on Lion Mountain where three vicious monsters, the Lion King, the Elephant

King and the Great Roc, seized my master. All of us disciples of his were in a very bad way too, tied up and put in a steamer to suffer the agony of fire and boiling water. Fortunately I was able to get away and summon a dragon king to save the others. But we could not escape our evil star: the master Chapter 77

and the others were recaptured when I was trying to sneak them out last night. When I went back into the city this morning to find out what had happened I learned that those utterly evil and ferocious monsters ate my master raw during the night. Nothing is left of his flesh and bones. On top of that my fellow–disciples Wuneng and Wujing are tied up there and will soon be dead too. I'm desperate. That's why your disciple has come to visit the Tathagata. I beg you in your great compassion to recite the Band–loosening Spell so that I can take the band off my head and give it back to you. Let your disciple go back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit and enjoy himself." Before he had finished saying this the tears welled up again. There was no end to his howls of misery.

"Don't upset yourself so, Wukong," said the Tathagata with a smile. "You can't beat those evil spirits. Their magical powers are more than you can handle. That is why you are so unhappy."

Monkey knelt below the Buddha and beat his breast as he replied, "Truly, Tathagata, I made havoc in Heaven all those years ago and was called Great Sage. Never in all my life had I been beaten before I met these vicious monsters."

"Stop being so sorry for yourself," said the Tathagata. "I know those evil spirits."

"Tathagata!" Monkey suddenly blurted out. "They say those evil spirits are relations of yours."

"Wicked macaque!" said the Tathagata. "How could an evil spirit be any relation of mine?"

"If they're not relations of yours how come you know them?" retorted Monkey with a grin.

"I know them because I see them with my all–seeing eyes," the Buddha replied. "The senior demon and the second demon have

masters. Ananda, Kasyapa, come here. One of you is to take a cloud to Mount Wutai and the other to Mount Emei. Summon Manjusri and Samantabhadra to come and see me." The two arhats left at once as they had been commanded. "They are the masters of the senior and the second demon chiefs. But the third demon does have some connection with me."

"On his mother's or his father's side?" Monkey asked.

"When the primal chaos was first separated the heavens opened up in the hour of the rat and the earth at the hour of the ox," the Buddha replied. "Mankind was born at the tiger hour. Then heaven and earth came together again and all living creatures were born, including beasts that walk and birds that fly. The unicorn is the most senior of the beasts that walk and the phoenix is the most senior of the birds that fly. When the phoenixes combined their essential spirit they gave birth to the peafowl and the Great Roc. When the peafowl came into the world she was the most evil of creatures and a man-eater. She could devour all the people for fifteen miles around in a single mouthful. When I was cultivating my sixteen-foot golden body on the peak of the snowy mountain she swallowed me as well. I went down into her belly. I wanted to escape through her backside, but for fear of soiling my body I cut my way out through her backbone and climbed Vulture Peak. I would have killed her, but all the Buddha host dissuaded me: to kill the peahen would have been like killing my own mother. So I kept her at my assembly on Vulture Peak and appointed her as the Buddha-mother, the Great Illustrious Peahen Queen Bodhisattva. The Great Roc was born of the same mother as she was. That is why we are relations of a kind."

When Monkey heard this he said with a smile, "By that line of argument, Tathagata, you're the evil spirit's nephew."

"I shall have to go and subdue that demon in person," the Tathagata said. Monkey kowtowed as he respectfully replied, "I beg you to condescend to grant us your illustrious presence."

Chapter 77

The Tathagata then came down from his lotus throne and went out through the monastery gates with all the Buddha host just as Ananda and Kasyapa arrived bringing Manjusri and Samantabhadra. These

two Bodhisattvas bowed to the Tathagata, who asked them, "How long have your animals been away from your mountains, Bodhisattvas?"

"Seven days," said Manjusri.

"A mere seven days on your mountains is several thousand years in the mortal world," the Tathagata replied.

"Goodness knows how many living beings they have destroyed there. Come with me to recapture them at once."

The two Bodhisattvas traveled at the Buddha's left and right hand as they flew through the air with the host.

This is what could be seen:

The shimmering clouds of blessing parted for Lord Buddha

As in his great compassion he came down from his shrine.

He taught the truth about all beings since creation,

Explaining how everything had been transformed in time.

Before him went five hundred holy arhats;

Behind him were three thousand guardians of the faith.

Ananda and Kasyapa were both in close attendance;

Samantabhadra and Manjusri came to conquer monsters.

The Great Sage had been granted this favour and succeeded in bringing the Lord Buddha and his host with him. It was not long before the city was in sight. "Tathagata," said Monkey, "that's Leonia, where the black vapors are coming from."

"You go down into the city first," said the Tathagata, "and start a fight with the evil spirits. Do not win. You must lose and come back up. Leave it to us to recapture them."

The Great Sage then brought his cloud straight down to land on the city wall, where he stood on the battlements and shouted abusively, "Evil beasts! Come out and fight me at once!" This caused such consternation among the junior demons in the towers on the wall that they jumped straight down into the city to report, "Your Majesties, Sun the Novice is on the wall, challenging us to battle."

"That ape hasn't been here for two or three days," the senior demon replied. "Now he's back challenging us to battle. Can he have fetched some reinforcements?"

"He's nothing to be scared of," said the third demon chief. "Let's all go and have a look." The three chieftains, all carrying their weapons, hurried up on the wall where they saw Monkey. Without a word they raised their Chapter 77

weapons and thrust at him. Monkey held them off by swinging his iron cudgel. When they had fought seven or eight rounds Monkey feigned defeat and fled.

"Where do you think you're going?" the demon king asked with a mighty shout, and with a somersault Monkey sprang up into mid–air. The three spirits went after him on clouds, but Monkey slipped aside and disappeared completely in the Lord Buddha's golden aura.

All that could be seen were the images of the Three Buddhas of Past, Future and Present, the five hundred arhats and the three thousand Protectors of the Faith who spread all around, encircling the three demon kings so closely that not even a drop of water could leak through.

"This is terrible, my brother," said the senior demon chief, lashing out wildly, "that ape is a really sharp operator. How did he manage to bring my master here?"

"Don't be afraid, elder brother," said the third demon. "If we all charge together we can cut down the Tathagata with our swords and spears and seize his Thunder Monastery." The demons, who had no sense of proper behavior, really did raise their swords to charge forward, hacking wildly.

Manjusri and Samantabhadra recited the words of a spell and shouted, "Won't you repent now, evil beasts?

What else do you hope for?" The senior and the second demon chiefs gave up the struggle, threw down their weapons, rolled and reverted to their true images. The two Bodhisattvas threw their lotus thrones on the demons' backs and flew over to sit on them. The two demons then gave up and submitted.

Now that the blue lion and the white elephant had been captured only the third evil monster was still unsubdued. Spreading its wings it dropped its heaven–square halberd and rose straight up to try to catch the Monkey King with a swing of its sharp talons, but as the Great Sage was biding in the golden aura the demon dared get nowhere near him. When the Tathagata realized what it was trying to do he made his golden aura flash and shook his head, the supreme meditator in the wind, to turn the creature into a bright red lump of bloody meat. The evil spirit seized it with a flourish of its sharp talons, whereupon the Lord Buddha pointed upwards with his hand, destroying the muscles in the monster's wings. It could not fly or get away from the top of the Buddha's head, and it reverted to its true appearance as a golden–winged vulture.

Opening its beak it said to the Buddha, "Tathagata, why did you use your great dharma powers to catch me like this?"

"You have been doing much evil here," the Tathagata replied. "Come with me and you will win credit for a good deed."

"You eat vegetarian food in great poverty and suffering at your place," the evil spirit replied, "but here I can eat human flesh and live in no end of luxury. If you kill me by starvation you'll be guilty of a sin."

"In the four continents I control countless living beings who worship me," the Buddha replied, "and whenever they are going to perform a service to me I shall tell them to make a sacrifice to you first." The Great Roc would have escaped and got away if it could. As it was he had no choice but to accept conversion.

Only then did Monkey emerge to kowtow to the Tathagata and say, "Lord Buddha, today you have captured the evil spirits and removed a great bane, but my master is dead."

At this the Great Roc said bitterly as it ground its teeth, "Damned ape! Why did you have to bring these ferocious men here to persecute me? I never ate that old monk of yours. He's in the Brocade Fragrance Pavilion now, isn't he?" When Monkey heard this he quickly kowtowed to thank the Lord Buddha. Not daring Chapter 77

to release the Great Roc, the Buddha made him into a guardian of the dharma in his brilliant halo then led his host back to his monastery on

their clouds. Monkey landed his cloud and went straight into the city, where there was not a single junior demon left. Indeed:

A snake cannot move without its head;

A bird cannot fly without its wings.

They had all fled for their lives when they saw the Buddha capturing their evil kings.

Monkey then freed Pig and Friar Sand, found the luggage and the horse, and said to his fellow–disciples, "The master hasn't been eaten. Come with me." He took the two of them straight into the inner compound where they found the Brocade Fragrance Pavilion. Opening the door and looking inside they saw an iron trunk from which could be heard the sound of Sanzang weeping.

Friar Sand used his demon–quelling staff to open the iron cage over the chest and raise its lid. "Master," he called.

At the sight of them Sanzang wept aloud and said, "Disciples, how were the demons beaten? How did you manage to find me here?" Monkey told him all the details of what had happened from beginning to end and Sanzang expressed boundless gratitude. Then master and disciples found some rice in the palace and ate their fill of it before packing their things and leaving the city along the main road West. Indeed: Only a true man can find the true scriptures;

The will's shouts and the heart's labors are in vain.

If you don't know when on this journey they were to see the Tathagata listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 78

In Bhiksuland the Hidden Gods Are Sent on an Errand of Mercy

In the Palace the Monster Is Revealed and the Way Discussed

A single thought at once disturbs a hundred monsters;

The hardest efforts are all to no avail.

One can only wash away each speck of dust,

Tidy everything and polish well.

Sweep all causation away and come to nirvana;

Waste no time and destroy the thousand demons.

You surely will be free from obstructions,

And rise to the Daluo Heaven when your deeds are done.

The story tells how the Great Sage Sun used all his ingenuity to fetch the Tathagata to subdue the demons and rescue Sanzang and the other two disciples, after which they left the city of Leonia and headed West. When they had been travelling for several more months it was winter, and this is what could be seen: The plum on the ridge was like broken jade

As the water in the pond slowly turned to ice.

All the red autumn leaves had fallen,

And the green of the pine looked fresher than ever.

The pale and scudding clouds were on the point of snowing;

Flat lay the withered grass upon the hills.

As far as the eye could see was chilly brightness

As the unseen cold went right into the bone.

Master and disciples braved the cold, sleeping out in the rain and dining off the wind, until as they were walking along another walled and moated city came into sight. "What sort of place is that over there, Wukong?" Sanzang asked Monkey, who replied, "We'll know when we get there. If it's the capital of a Western kingdom we'll have to present our passport to be inspected and returned. If it's a prefecture or county town we'll go straight through." Before master and disciples could finish their conversation they had arrived at the city gates.

Sanzang dismounted and the four of them went in through the curtain wall outside the gates. Noticing an old soldier sleeping shielded from the wind under the South – facing wall, Brother Monkey went up to

him, shook him and said, "Sir!"

When the old soldier awoke with a start to open his bleary eyes and see Monkey he fell to his knees to kowtow and say, "My Lord!"

Chapter 78

1085

Journey to the West

"There's no need for such alarm," said Monkey. "I'm no evil god, so why call me your lord?"

"Aren't you Lord Thunder God?" the old soldier asked, kowtowing again.

"What a thing to say," Monkey replied. "We're monks from the East on our way to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. We've just arrived here. Could I ask what this place is called?" This answer finally eased the old soldier's mind.

With a yawn he got back on his feet, stretched and said, "Please forgive me, reverend gentlemen. This country used to be called Bhiksuland but its name has been changed to Boytown."

"Do you have a king?" Monkey asked.

"Yes, yes," the old soldier replied.

Monkey then turned to report to the Tang Priest, "This country used to be called Bhiksuland but the name's been altered to Boytown, though I don't know what the change signifies."

"If it was Bhiksuland before why is it Boytown now?" the Tang Priest wondered.

"I expect there was a King Bhiksu who died," said Pig, "and they changed the name to Boytown when a boy succeeded him."

"Impossible," said the Tang Priest, "impossible. Let's go in and make some enquiries in the street."

"That's right," said Friar Sand. "The old soldier wouldn't have known anyhow, and on top of that elder brother gave him such a fright that he talked nonsense. We'll ask some more questions in the city."

When they had gone through the third pair of gates they came to a great market on a main street. The people were well – dressed and their bearing distinguished.

A hubbub of voices came from bar and music hall;

High hung the curtains outside splendid shop and teahouse.

Business was good in firms by the thousand;

Wealth flowed free in shopping street and market.

The dealers in metal and silk were swarming like ants,

Caring only for money while struggling for fame and wealth.

With these noble manners, magnificent scenery

And peaceful waters it was a time of prosperity.

Chapter 78

1086

Journey to the West

The master and his three disciples, who were leading the horse and carrying the baggage, spent some time walking around the streets as they admired the general air of prosperity. In the entrance to every house there was a basketwork coop of the sort geese are kept in. "Disciples," said Sanzang, "why do all the people here put coops in their gateways?" Pig's response to this was to look around and see that there were indeed lines of coops hung with satin curtains of many colours. "Master," said the idiot with a smile, "today must be a lucky one for weddings and celebrations. Everybody's having a wedding."

"Nonsense," said Monkey. "How could every single family possibly be having a wedding? There must be some other reason for this. I'm going over to take a look."

"You're not to go," said Sanzang, grabbing hold of him. "You look so ugly that people might take offence."

"I'll go as something else," Brother Monkey replied.

Making a spell with his hands the splendid Great Sage said the words of a spell, shook himself, turned into a bee, spread his wings, flew to

one of the coops and slipped in through the curtains to take a look. A little boy was sitting inside. Monkey looked inside another family's coop and there was a child in that too. He inspected eight or nine households and all of them had a child. All were boys: there was not a single girl. Some were sitting up in their coops and playing and some were crying; some were eating fruit and some were snoozing.

His inspection over, Monkey turned back into his normal self and reported to the Tang Priest, "There are little boys in the coops. The oldest is under six and the youngest only four. I don't know why they're here." Sanzang wondered what the explanation could be.

Turning a comer they saw the gateway to an official building. It was a government hostel with golden pavilions. The venerable elder was delighted.

"Disciples," he said, "we will go into this hostel. We can find out where we are, give the horse a rest and put up for the night."

"Yes, that's right," said Friar Sand. "Let's go straight in." This the four of them happily did, a fact that the officials there reported to the hostel's superintendent.

When the superintendent had led them inside greetings had been exchanged and they had all sat down, the superintendent asked, "Where have you come from, reverend sir?"

"I am a monk sent by the Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven," Sanzang replied. "Now that we have arrived at this excellent establishment I will of course present my passport for inspection. Could we, I wonder, impose on your hospitality for the night?"

The superintendent ordered tea, and when it had been drank he saw to their entertainment and told the staff who were on duty to look after the pilgrims. After thanking him for this Sanzang went on to ask, "Could we go to the palace today to see His Majesty and have our passport inspected?"

"That will not be possible this evening," the superintendent replied. "It will have to wait until tomorrow morning. I hope that you will spend a comfortable night in this humble hostel."

A little later, when all had been prepared, the superintendent of the hostel invited the four travelers to take a vegetarian meal with him. He also told his staff to sweep out the guest rooms for them to spend

the night in.

Sanzang expressed endless gratitude. When they were all seated the venerable elder said, "I wonder if I could trouble you for information on something that I cannot understand. How do you raise children in your Chapter 78

country?"

"People are the same the whole world over, just as there are never two suns in the sky," the superintendent replied. "Children are born when their time comes after the father's seed has joined with the mother's blood and they have been in the womb for ten lunar months. After they are born they are suckled for three years and their bodies gradually grow. Everybody knows that."

"What you tell me is no different from how they grow in my humble country," Sanzang replied. "But when we came into the city we saw a goose coop with a little boy inside in front of every house in the street. This is something I cannot understand, which is why I ventured to raise the question."

"Ignore that, reverend sir," whispered the hostel superintendent into Sanzang's ear. "Don't ask about it. Put it out of your mind. Don't even mention it. Would you like to settle down for the night before starting your journey again tomorrow morning?" Sanzang's response was to seize hold of the superintendent and demand an explanation.

"Watch your words," the superintendent replied, shaking his head and wagging his finger, but Sanzang was not going to drop the matter. He insisted on being told all the details. The superintendent had no choice but to dismiss all the staff on duty.

When they were alone under the lamplight he whispered to Sanzang, "The goose coops you asked about are there because our king is a bad ruler. Why ever do you have to keep asking about it?"

"How is he a bad ruler?" Sanzang asked. "I will not be able to set my mind at ease until you give me an explanation."

"This country is really called Bhiksuland," the superintendent replied. "Boytown is only what the people have started calling it. Three years

ago an old man dressed as a Taoist came here with a girl just fifteen years old.

She was a ravishing beauty, just like a Bodhisattva Guanyin. He presented her to our present king, who was so smitten by her charms that she became the favorite of all his women. She was given the title Queen Beauty.

For some time now he's had no eyes for any of his other queens or consorts. He's so insatiable that he's been at it day and night. The result is nervous exhaustion and physical collapse. He's eating and drinking next to nothing. He might die at any moment. The Royal College of Physicians has tried every possible medicine without any success. The Taoist who presented the girl to the king was rewarded with the title of Elder of the Nation. He has a secret foreign formula for making people live a great deal longer. He's been to ten continents and the three magic islands to collect the ingredients. Everything is ready. The only problem is that it needs a terrible adjuvant to help it ——a potion made from the hearts of 1,111 little boys. When he's taken it he'll have a thousand years of vigorous life ahead of him. All the little boys being kept in the coops are the ones that have been chosen. Their parents are so afraid of the king that none of them dares weep. That's why they've put out the story that this place is now called Boytown. When you go to the palace tomorrow morning, reverend sir, you must only present your passport to be inspected and returned. Say nothing about any of this." When he had said all this he left them.

Sanzang was so horrified by what he had heard that his bones turned soft and his muscles went numb. He could not help the tears that streamed down his face as he started sobbing aloud. "Foolish king," he exclaimed,

"foolish king. Your lechery has ruined your health, and now you are planning to destroy all those young lives.

How could you? What misery! The pain of it all is killing me." There is a poem about it that goes: The wicked monarch's folly makes him forget the truth;

His health is ruined by his unbridled lusts.

Pursuing eternal life by killing little children,

He slaughters his subjects to avoid Heaven's punishment.

This is all more than the merciful monk can bear:

He cannot accept the official's worldly wisdom.

Long are his sighs as he weeps in the lamplight;

Stricken with grief is the Buddha worshipper.

"Master," said Pig, going up to him, "what's the matter with you? What you're doing is like taking a stranger's coffin to your own home and weeping over it. Don't upset yourself like that. As the rhyme goes,
When a monarch insists that his subjects will die

None that are loyal to live will aspire;

When a father commands his own offspring to perish

Any dutiful son will most surely expire.

The people he's going to kill are his own subjects. What are they to you? Take off your clothes, get some sleep and 'don't worry about the ancients.'"

"Disciple," said Sanzang, his tears still flowing, "you haven't a shred of compassion. The most important thing for us monks as we accumulate good deeds is to help others. How could this deluded king be so set in his wickedness? Never have I ever heard that eating human hearts could prolong life. How could something so terrible not grieve me?"

"Don't grieve so, Master," said Friar Sand. "When you present our passport tomorrow and seethe king you can talk to him about it. Even if he doesn't accept your advice you'll be able to see what the Elder of the Nation looks like. Probably he's an evil spirit who's thought all this up because he wants to eat human hearts."

"Wujing is right," said Brother Monkey. "Go to bed now, Master, and tomorrow morning I'll go to court with you to see what this Elder of the Nation is like. If he's human he's probably a heretic who doesn't follow orthodox ways but believes in drugs, and I'll convert him with the essential teachings of intrinsic nature. If he's an evil spirit I'll catch him, show the king what he is, and urge the king to control his desires

and build up his strength. Whatever happens I won't let him kill those children."

As soon as he heard this Sanzang bowed to Monkey with great courtesy and said, "What an excellent suggestion! But when we see the deluded king we must say nothing about this in case he thinks we are guilty Chapter 78

of not knowing our place and spreading slander. What could we do if that happened?"

"I've got my magic powers," Monkey replied. "First of all I'm going to get the little boys in the coops away from the city so that he'll have nobody to take the hearts out of tomorrow. The local officials will of course report this and the king will be bound either to order a discussion with the Elder of the Nation or else to demand more information. This will give us a chance to submit our memorial without getting ourselves into trouble." Sanzang was very pleased.

"How are you going to get the children out of the town now?" he asked. "If you really can rescue them you will be doing the greatest of good deeds, worthy disciple. But do it quick, because if you lose any time you may be too late."

Summoning up his might Monkey stood up and gave Pig and Friar Sand their parting instructions: "Sit here with the master while I do my stuff. If you notice a magical wind blowing that'll be the boys leaving the city."

Sanzang and the other two disciples said, "We invoke the Saviour Bhaisajya – guru Buddha. We invoke the Saviour Bhaisajya – guru Buddha."

Once outside the doors the Great Sage whistled, rose into mid – air, made a spell with his hands and said the magic words, called out " *Om* pure dharma world," and summoned the city god, the local deities, the officiating immortals, the Protectors of the Faith of the four quarters and the center, the Four Duty Gods, the Six Dings and the Six Jias and the Guardians of the Teaching.

They all came to him where he was in midair, bowed and said, "Great Sage, what is the urgent business on which you have summoned us in

the middle of the night?"

"My journey has brought me to Bhiksuland," Monkey replied, "where the king is a bad one who believes in evil doctrines. He wants to take the hearts out of little boys to make the adjuvant to a medicine that he hopes will make him live for ever. My master finds this utterly horrible and has asked me to rescue the boys and destroy the demon. That is why I've asked all you gentlemen here. I want you to use your magical powers to lift all the little boys, coops and all, over the city wall into a mountain hollow or somewhere deep in a forest.

Keep them there for a day or two. Give them fruit to eat and don't let them go hungry. Keep watch over them in secret and don't frighten them or make them cry. When I've eliminated the evil, brought the country back to good government and persuaded the king to mend his ways and am about to leave, you must bring them back to me."

The gods all listened to their orders then brought their clouds down to land so that they could use their magical powers. The city was filled with a blustering negative wind that brought with it an all－pervasive and sinister fog.

All the stars in the sky were obscured by the negative wind;

The moon was blacked out by the magical fog for many a mile.

At first the wind was gusty,

And then it blew like a hurricane.

When it was gusting

Chapter 78

1090

Journey to the West

All ran to the gateways to rescue their children;

Then in the hurricane

They wanted to save their own flesh and blood in the coops.

The air turned so chilly that none dared show their heads;

The cold was so piercing that clothes froze like iron.

Vainly did parents look all around;

The families all were stricken with grief.

The sinister wind blew right across the land

As the boys in their baskets were carried off by the gods.

Although that was a night of bereavement and grief

Joy was coming to all the next day.

There is another poem about it that goes:

Compassion has always been strong in the Sakyamuni faith;

The achievement of goodness explains the Great Vehicle.

A multitude of holy ones all accumulate goodness;

For the Three Refuges and Five Precepts harmony is needed.

The land of Bhiksu was not to be ruined by its monarch

When a thousand little boys were to forfeit their lives.

Monkey and his master had brought them to safety,

Which conferred more merit than the Great Wisdom.

By the third watch of the night the gods had carried all the coops off and hidden them in all the safe places.

Monkey then landed his auspicious light and went straight back to the government hostel, where to his secret delight he could hear the other three still chanting, "We invoke the Saviour Bhaisajya – guru Buddha."

"Master," he said, going up to them, "I'm back. What was the negative wind like?"

Chapter 78

1091

Journey to the West

"Terrific," said Pig.

"How did the rescue of the children go?" Sanzang asked.

"Every single one of them has been saved," Monkey replied. "They'll all be brought back when we set out again." The master thanked him over and over again before finally going to sleep.

When Sanzang awoke at dawn he dressed himself in his best vestments and said, "Wukong, I am going to the early audience to present our passport."

"If you go by yourself, Master," Monkey replied, "I'm afraid that you won't be able to manage. Let me go with you. Then I'll be able to find out about the evil in this country."

"If you go you will refuse to pay homage," said Sanzang, "and the king may well take it amiss."

"I won't be seen," said Monkey. "I'll go with you in secret and protect you." This pleased Sanzang very much.

He had told Pig and Friar Sand to look after the luggage and horse and was just about to set out when the superintendent of the hostel came in to see him. The superintendent was struck by the difference between vestments he wore this day compared with what he had been wearing the day before.

His cassock was of brocade, set with exotic gems;

On his head he wore a gold–topped Vairocana mitre.

He held a nine–ringed monastic staff

And hid a divine radiance in his breast.

The passport was fastened tightly to his body,

Wrapped in brocade inside another cloth.

He moved like an arhat come down to earth;

His face was truly that of a living Buddha.

When the superintendent had greeted Sanzang courteously he murmured into his ear advice against meddling in matters that were none of his business. Sanzang nodded and assented. The Great Sage stole to a place by the gate, said the words of a spell, shook himself and turned into the tiniest of insects that flew with a high–pitched

hum to Sanzang's mitre.

Sanzang left the government hostel and headed straight for the palace.

Arriving at the palace gates Sanzang saw a eunuch officer to whom he bowed and said, "This humble monk has been sent by the Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. Now that I have Chapter 78

reached your distinguished country I must present my passport to be inspected and returned. I beg Your Excellency to report this to His Majesty." This the eunuch duly did.

The king was very pleased. "A monk from afar must be a holy man," he said, ordering that Sanzang be asked in. When the venerable elder had paid his respects at the foot of the steps of the throne hall he was invited to enter the hall and take a seat. Sanzang thanked the king and sat down. The king looked weak and enervated.

When he raised his hands to make a polite salutation he could not do so properly, and he was incapable of continuous speech. His right was so blurred that he had to make several attempts to read the document that Sanzang handed to him before he could sign, seal and return it to the Tang Priest, who put it away again.

The king was just about to ask why they were fetching the scriptures when one of his aides reported, "His Excellency the Elder of the Nation is here." Leaning on one of his young eunuch attendants the king struggled down from his throne to greet the Elder. Sanzang hastily got to his feet, stood to one side and looked round to see that the Elder of the Nation was an aged Taoist who advanced with a swagger towards the steps of the throne.

On his head he wore a goose—yellow silken cap,

Round his body a scented cloak of silk and crane feathers,

And at his waist a triple sash of blue velvet.

On his feet were sandals of hemp and grasscloth;

At the top of his rattan stick coiled a dragon.

The pouch at his chest was embroidered with dragon, phoenix and

flowers.

His jadelike face radiated well—being;

A gray beard blew about his chin.

Flames shot from golden pupils

In eyes even longer than his eyebrows.

Clouds followed his steps

As he wandered through incense—laden mists.

The officials below the steps received him with obeisances,

Announcing the presence of the Elder of the Nation.

When he reached the throne hall the Elder of the Nation performed no obeisance but arrogantly strode straight in. The king leaned forward in a bow and said, "We are most fortunate that you have condescended to make your immortal way here, Elder of the Nation." He ordered that an embroidered stool be set on his left for the Chapter 78

Elder to sit on.

Taking a step forward Sanzang bowed and said, "Greetings, Elder of the Nation." The Elder sat majestically on his seat, but instead of returning Sanzang's courtesy he turned to the king and asked, "Where's this monk from?"

"He has been sent by the Tang court in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven," the king replied, "and is here to present his passport for inspection."

"The road West is dark and dismal," said the Elder of the Nation with a smile. "There's nothing good about it."

"The West has always been a land of bliss," Sanzang replied. "How could it not be good?"

"There is an old saying we once heard that monks are disciples of the

Buddha," said the king. "I wonder whether it is true that by being a monk and turning to the Buddha one can live for ever." When Sanzang heard this he put his hands together and replied:

"One who becomes a monk gets away from all kinds of causation. By understanding nature he learns that all dharmas are empty. Great wisdom is casual and drifts in non–living. The true secret is hidden; it wanders in extinction. When the three worlds are empty all origins are ordered; when the six sense–organs are purified all troubles are finished. To be resolute, single–minded and enlightened one must understand the heart. When the heart is purified it can shine alone; when the heart is sincere all regions are imbued with it. The true appearance has neither deficiency nor excess and can be seen in life. The images of illusion always decay.

Why seek what is beyond one's lot? The way to enter meditation is through meritorious deeds and by sitting in silence; the root of cultivating one's conduct truly is charity and kindness. Great skill appears as clumsiness and knows that all deeds are achieved through inaction. The finest plans involve no calculation; everything must be left alone. It only needs one heart not to move for every action to be perfect. It is truly absurd to try to strengthen the male by drawing on the female and nonsensical to try to extend one's years by taking elixirs.

The only essential is that all the causation of every speck of dust must be discarded and that every type of matter should be empty. Live plain and pure; let your desires be few. Then naturally you will enjoy life without end for ever."

When the Elder of the Nation heard this he laughed at it. "Phooey," he said, pointing at the Tang Priest,

"phooey! You're talking a load of rubbish, monk. Fancy you talking about understanding nature, and you a member of the faith that preaches nirvana. You don't have any idea of where nature comes from. Sitting still like a dead tree to enter dhyana is wasted effort as far as self–cultivation and tempering are concerned. In the words of the saying,

Sit, sit, sit;

Your backside's split.

The fire's too hot;

Good that's not.

What you don't realize at all is this:

Chapter 78

1094

Journey to the West

"One who cultivates immortality has strong bones; one who attains the Way has the most magical spirit.

Carrying his bowl and ladle he goes into the mountains to visit his friends; he picks every kind of herb to succor humanity. He makes a rainhat from immortal flowers, plucks the fragrant orchid to make his bed. He sings, claps and dances, then goes to sleep. When expounding the Way he teaches the doctrines of the Supreme One; he eliminates the evil of the human world with holy water. He takes the finest breath of heaven and earth, gathers the essence of the sun and moon. By controlling the negative and positive forces he creates the elixir; through the mastery of fire and water the foetus is formed. On the sixteenth day of the month the negative is eliminated, hazily and obscurely. In the twenty−seventh day of winter the positive begins to grow, darkly and mysteriously. He gathers the herbs of each of the four seasons, refining his elixir to nourish the nine transformations. Astride his blue phoenix he ascends to the purple palace; riding his white crane he goes to the jasper capital. He visits all the splendors of Heaven, showing the efficacy of the wonderful Way. Just compare it with the dhyana teachings of your Sakyamuni, your elimination of atman and your nirvana that enables you to shuffle off your stinking husk. None of this lifts you out of the worldly dust. Among the Three Teachings it is supreme; the Way alone has always been esteemed."

The king was delighted to hear this exposition, and all the court officials exclaimed with admiration, "That's splendid, 'the Way alone has always been esteemed.'" Sanzang was overcome by humiliation at all this praise going to his rival. The king then told his department of foreign relations to lay on a banquet of vegetarian food for the monks from a far country when they left the city to travel West.

Sanzang thanked the king for his kindness and withdrew. As he was leaving the throne hall and going out of the palace Monkey flew down from the top of his mitre to say into his ear, "Master, the Elder of the Nation is an evil spirit, and the king has been bewitched. Go back to the hostel and wait for your meal while I get some information here."

Sanzang understood this and left through the main gates of the palace.

Of him we will say no more. Watch Monkey as he flies straight to a jade screen in the throne hall and lands on it. From the ranks of officials the military commanders of the capital stepped forward to report, "Your Majesty, last night a cold wind carried away the little boys in their goose coops from every house in every ward of the city. They have vanished without a trace, coops and all."

This report both alarmed and angered the king, who said to the Elder of the Nation, "Heaven must be destroying us. We had the good fortune to be given the formula for your elixir after months of serious illness that the royal physicians have been unable to cure. We were preparing to have the boys cut open at noon today and their hearts taken out to be made into the adjuvant for the elixir. Never did we imagine that a cold wind would blow them all away. If this is not Heaven destroying us what is it?"

"Don't upset yourself," the Elder of the Nation replied with a smile. "By blowing them away Heaven is giving Your Majesty eternal life."

"How can you maintain that Heaven is giving me eternal life when they have just been blown away?" the king asked.

"When I was coming to court this morning," the Elder of the Nation replied, "I saw a uniquely marvellous adjuvant that will be far superior to 1,111 little boys' hearts. They would only lengthen Your Majesty's life by a thousand years, but if you take my elixir with this other adjuvant you can live for a hundred million years."

The king was mystified about what this adjuvant could be, but only after repeated questions did the Elder of the Nation reply, "The monk from the East who is being sent to fetch the scriptures has pure organs and regular features. His is the body of one who has cultivated his conduct for ten lifetimes. He has been a monk Chapter 78

since childhood and has preserved his masculine purity, which all makes him ten thousand times better than those little boys. If you can make a decoction from his heart with which to take my elixir I can guarantee you an extremely long life."

When the deluded king heard this he believed it completely. "Why

didn't you tell us before?" he said to the Elder of the Nation. "If it's as good as you say we should have kept him when he was here just now and not let him go."

"This will present no problem," the Elder of the Nation said. "You have already told the department of foreign relations to give him a vegetarian banquet. He can't possibly leave the city before eating the meal. Urgent orders must be issued to have the gates firmly closed. Send troops to surround the government hostel and bring that monk here. First we will try to win his heart by treating him with courtesy. If he agrees we will cut it out and give him a royal burial, build him a temple and make offerings to him. If he will not agree we'll use rough methods. We can tie him up and cut it out. There will be no problem." The deluded ruler accepted this suggestion and ordered that all the gates be closed. He then sent the officers and men of the royal guard to surround the hostel.

Having found all this out Monkey flew straight to the hostel, turned back into himself and said to the Tang Priest, "Something terrible's happened, Master, something terrible." Sanzang had just begun to eat the king's vegetarian banquet with Pig and Friar Sand when this sudden announcement scattered his three bodily spirits and made smoke come out of his seven orifices. He collapsed in the dust, pouring with sweat, and unable to see clearly or speak.

Friar Sand was so alarmed he came forward to help him back to his feet, calling, "Wake up, Master, wake up."

"What's so terrible?" Pig asked. "What's so terrible? You should have broken the news gently instead of giving the master such a scare."

"When the master left the palace I went back to keep an eye on things," Monkey replied. "That Elder of the Nation is an evil spirit. A moment later the city garrison came to report about the cold wind carrying the little boys away. This upset the king, but the Elder of the Nation cheered him up by saying that this was Heaven giving him eternal life. He wants to use your heart as an adjuvant for the elixir of immortality, Master. The deluded king has accepted this wicked suggestion and ordered his best troops to surround this hostel. He's also sent an aide to ask you for your heart, Master."

"What a merciful and compassionate chap you are," said Pig with a laugh. "You saved the boys and made the wind blow all right, but now you've got us in this disastrous mess."

Trembling and shaking, Sanzang dragged himself to his feet, seized hold of Monkey and said imploringly,

"Good disciple, how are we to get out of this?"

"If you want to get out of this," said Monkey, "there'll have to be a switch."

"What do you mean by a switch?" Friar Sand asked.

"If you want to survive," Monkey replied, "the disciple will have to become the master and the master the disciple. Do that and we'll be safe."

"Save my life," said Sanzang, "and I will gladly become your disciple or even your disciple's disciple."

Chapter 78

1096

Journey to the West

"In that case there must be no hesitation," Monkey replied, continuing, "Pig, mix up some mud at once." The idiot loosened some earth with his rake then, not daring to go outside for water, lifted his tunic to make some water himself. With this he mixed up a lump of foul −smelling mud that he handed to Monkey. Monkey had no option but to beat it out flat and press it against his face so that it looked like a monkey's face. Then he told his master to stand up and neither move nor say anything while he placed the mask on his face, said the words of a spell, blew a magic breath and said, "Change!"

The venerable elder now looked just like Monkey. He took off his own clothes and put on Monkey's while Monkey dressed in his master's clothes, made a spell with his hands, said the magic words, shook himself and made himself look just like the Tang Priest. Even Pig and Friar Sand could not tell that he really was not.

Just when they had completed the disguises together there came the sound of gongs and drums as a dense forest of spears and swords appeared. The commanders of the royal guard had surrounded the hostel with their three thousand men. A royal aide came into the main hall of the hostel to ask, "Where is the reverend gentleman from the Tang court in the East?"

The superintendent of the hostel anxiously fell to his knees and said, pointing, "In the guest room over there."

The aide then went into the room and said, "Venerable elder from Tang, His Majesty has sent for you."

Pig and Friar Sand stood on either side of the imitation Monkey to guard him while the imitation Tang Priest went out through the door, bowed and said, "Your Excellency, what does His Majesty wish to say to me?

Why has he sent for me?" The aide stepped forward to grab hold of him and say, "You and I are going to the palace. His Majesty must have some use for you." Alas!

Wickedness was stronger than goodness and mercy;

Goodness and mercy only led to catastrophe.

If you don't know whether they were to survive this departure listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 79

Searching the Cave to Capture the Fiend They Meet Longevity

The Reigning Monarch Saves the Little Boys

The story tells how the royal aide dragged the imitation Tang Priest out of the government hostel and marched him, heavily surrounded by royal guardsmen, straight to the gates of the palace, where he said to the eunuch gate officer, "Please be so good as to report to His Majesty that we have brought the Tang Priest." The eunuch officer hurried into the palace to pass this on to the deluded king, who ordered that they be brought in.

All the officials knelt at the foot of the steps to the throne hall, leaving the imitation Tang Priest standing alone in the middle of them.

"King of Bhiksuland," he shouted, "what have you summoned me here to say to me?"

"We are sick with a chronic illness that has dragged on for many a day without any improvement," the king replied. "Now the Elder of the Nation has to our good fortune presented us with a prescription that has been made up. All that is needed now is an adjuvant. The reason we have sent for you, reverend sir, is to ask you for the adjuvant. If we recover we will build a temple to you in which offerings will be made in all four seasons and incense will be burnt to you in perpetuity by our country."

"I am a man of religion," the imitation Tang Priest replied, "and have brought nothing with me. I do not know what adjuvant the Elder of the Nation has told Your Majesty you need."

"Your heart, reverend sir," the deluded monarch replied.

"I will be frank with Your Majesty," the imitation Tang Priest said. "I have a number of hearts. I don't know which you want."

"Monk," pronounced the Elder of the Nation, who was standing beside the king. "I want your black heart."

"Very well then," the imitation Tang Priest replied. "Produce your knife at once and open up my chest. If there is a black heart there I shall offer it to you obediently."

The deluded monarch thanked him delightedly and ordered an official in attendance to bring a small knife with a blade shaped like a cow's ear that was handed to the imitation Tang Priest. Taking the knife, the imitation Tang Priest undid his clothes, thrust out his chest, pressed his left hand against his abdomen and cut the skin of his stomach open with the knife in his right hand. There was a whoosh, and out rolled a whole pile of hearts. The civilian officials all turned pale with fright; the military officers were numbed.

When the Elder of the Nation saw this from inside the throne hall he said, "This monk is a suspicious–minded character. He has too many hearts."

The imitation Tang Priest then held up the hearts one by one, each dripping with blood, for all to see. They included a loyal red heart, a pure white heart, a yellow heart, an avaricious heart, a fame–hungry heart, a jealous heart, a calculating heart, an over–competitive heart, an ambitious heart, an overbearing heart, a murderous heart, a vicious heart, a frightened heart, a cautious heart, a heretical heart and a heart full of indefinable gloom. There was every kind of evil heart except a black one. The deluded ruler was horror–struck, unable to

speak until he said in trembling tones, "Put them away! Put them away!"

The imitation Tang Priest had taken as much as he could, so he put his magic away and turned back into himself to say to the deluded monarch, "Your Majesty, you're not at all perceptive. We monks all have good hearts. It's only this Elder of the Nation of yours who has a black heart. His would make a good adjuvant for the medicine. If you don't believe me I'll take his out to show you."

When the Elder of the Nation heard this he opened his eyes wide to take a careful look. He saw that the monk's face had changed to something quite different. Heavens! Recognizing him as the Great Sage Monkey who had been so famous five hundred years ago he made a getaway by cloud. Monkey did a somersault and sprang up into mid–air to shout, "Where do you think you're going? Take this from me!" The Elder used his stick with a dragon on its head to meet the blow from Monkey's cudgel. The two of them fought a fine battle up in the sky:

The As–You–Will cudgel

Chapter 79

1098

Journey to the West

And the dragon stick

Making clouds up in the sky.

The Elder of the Nation was really an evil spirit,

Using his fiendish daughter's seductive charms.

The king had made himself ill through his lust;

The monster wanted to butcher the boys.

There was no escape from the Great Sage's divine powers

To catch demons and to rescue their victims.

The cudgel's blows to the head were really vicious;

Splendid was the way in which the stick met them.

They fought so hard that the sky was full of mist,

Casting city and people into darkness and fear.

The souls of civil and military officials went flying;

The faces of the queens and concubines turned pale.

The deluded king tried desperately to hide,

Trembling and shaking, unable to do anything.

The cudgel was as fierce as a tiger from the mountains;

The staff whirled round like a dragon leaving the sea.

Now they made havoc in Bhiksuland

As good and evil were clearly set apart.

When the evil spirit had fought over twenty hard rounds with Monkey his dragon staff was no longer a match for the gold-banded cudgel. Feinting with his staff, the spirit turned himself into a beam of cold light and dropped into the inner quarters of the palace to take the demon queen he had presented to the king out through the palace gates with him. She too turned into cold light and disappeared.

Bringing his cloud down, the Great Sage landed in the palace and said to the officials, "That's a fine Elder of the Nation you have!" The officials, all bowed to him, thanking the holy monk.

"No need for that," said Monkey. "Go and see where your deluded king is."

"When our monarch saw the fighting he hid in terror," the officials replied. "We do not know which of the palaces he is in."

"Find him at once," Monkey ordered them. "Perhaps Queen Beauty has carried him off." As soon as the officials heard this they rushed with Monkey straight to the rooms of Queen Beauty, ignoring the fact that these were the inner quarters. They were deserted and there was no

sign of the king. Queen Beauty was nowhere to be seen either. The queens of the main, the Eastern and the Western palaces and the consorts of the six compounds all came to kowtow in thanks to the Great Sage.

"Please get up," Monkey said. "It's too early for thanks now. Go and find your sovereign lord."

A little later four or five eunuchs appeared from behind the Hall of Caution supporting the deluded king. All the ministers prostrated themselves on the ground and called out in union, "Sovereign lord! Sovereign lord!

We are grateful that this holy monk came here to uncover the impostor. The Elder of the Nation was an evil spirit and Queen Beauty has vanished too." When the king heard this he invited Monkey to come from the inner quarters of the palace to the throne hall, where he kowtowed in thanks to Monkey.

"Venerable sir," he said, "when you came to court this morning you were so handsome. Why have you made yourself look different now?"

"I can tell you for a fact, Your Majesty," replied Monkey with a grin, "that the one who came this morning was my master Sanzang, the younger brother of the Tang Emperor. I'm his disciple Sun Wukong. There are two more of us disciples, Zhu Wuneng, or Pig, and Sha Wujing, or Friar Sand, who are both now in the government hostel. I turned myself into my master's double and came here to defeat the monster because I knew that you had been deluded by his evil suggestions and were going to take my master's heart to use as an adjuvant for your elixir."

When the king heard this he ordered his ministers in attendance to go straight to the hostel to fetch Monkey's master and fellow–disciples. The news that Brother Monkey had turned back into himself and had fought the evil spirit in mid–air gave Sanzang such a fright that his souls scattered. It was lucky that Pig and Friar Sand were able to hold him up. His face was still plastered with stinking mud and he was feeling thoroughly depressed and miserable when he heard someone call, "Master of the Law, we are ministers in attendance sent by the king of Bhiksuland to invite you to court to receive His Majesty's thanks."

"Don't be afraid, master," said Pig, "don't be afraid. This time he's not sending for you to take your heart out.

I'm sure that elder brother has succeeded and they're inviting you there to thank you."

"Even if they have come to invite me there because he has succeeded I could not face anyone with this stinking mask on," Sanzang replied.

"We've got no option," said Pig. "We'll just have to go to see my elder brother. He's bound to have a solution."

The venerable elder really did have no choice but to go to the main hall of the hostel with Pig and Friar Sand carrying the luggage and leading the horse. When the ministers saw him they were all terrified.

"My lord," they said, "they both have heads like monsters."

"Please don't take offence at our ugliness," Friar Sand replied. "Both of us have the bodies that were left after an earlier life. If my master could see my elder brother he'd become handsome straight away."

When the three of them reached the palace they went straight to the throne hall without waiting to be summoned. As soon as Monkey saw them he turned round and came down from the hall to meet them. Pulling Chapter 79

the mud mask off his master's face he blew on him with magic breath, called "Change!" and turned the Tang Priest back into himself. Sanzang was now in better spirits. The king came down from the throne hall to greet him as "Master of the Law" and "ancient Buddha." Master and disciples then tethered the horse and went into the throne hall to be presented.

"Does Your Majesty know where the monsters came from?" Monkey asked. "Let me go and catch them both for you. Then we will have eliminated future catastrophe."

When all the queens, consorts and concubines of the three palaces and six compounds, who were behind the screen of bright green jade, heard Monkey saying that he was going to eliminate future catastrophe they cast aside all their inhibitions about appearing in front of an outsider, and a male one at that, as they came out to bow to him and say, "We beg you, holy monk and venerable Buddha, to destroy them completely, root and branch, with your dharma powers.

That would be an act of the greatest kindness, and we would of course reward you richly." Quickly responding to their bows Monkey insisted that the king tell him where the monsters lived.

"We asked him when he came here three years ago," the king replied shamefacedly, "and he told us that it was only some twenty miles to the South of the city, in Pure Splendor Grange on Willow Slope. The Elder of the Nation was old and had no son, only the daughter that his second wife had given him. She was just fifteen and unmarried. He offered to present her to us, and because we fancied the girl we accepted her. She was the favorite among all the palace women. We never expected that we would fall so ill that all the prescriptions of the Royal College of Physicians would be of no avail. Then he told us that he had a formula for an elixir for which a decoction of boiled little boys' hearts was needed as the adjuvant. In our folly we believed him and chose some boys from among the common people. At noon today we were going to operate and take out their hearts. We never expected that you would come down to us, holy monk, and that at that very moment all the boys would disappear in their coops. Then he said that as you were a holy monk who had cultivated the truth for ten lifetimes and not yet dissipated your primal masculinity your heart would be ten thousand times more effective than the little boys' ones. In our temporary delusion we did not realize that you would see through the evil monster, holy monk. We hope that you will make full use of your great dharma to eliminate any future catastrophe. All the wealth of the nation will be given to you as your reward."

"I will tell you the truth," Monkey replied. "Because my master took pity on the little boys in the coops he told me to hide them. Don't say anything about giving us wealth. When I capture the evil monsters that will be a good deed to my credit. Come with me, Pig."

"Whatever you say, elder brother," Pig replied. "The only thing is that I've got an empty belly: I'll be rather weak." The king then ordered the department of foreign affairs to prepare a vegetarian meal at once. Before long the food arrived.

Having eaten his fill, Pig braced his spirits and rose by cloud with Monkey. The king, queens, consorts and civil and military officials were all so astonished that they all kowtowed to the sky, exclaiming, "They really are immortals and Buddhas come down to earth." The Great Sage led Pig twenty miles due South, stopped their wind and cloud and started searching for the demons' home. All he could see was a clear stream running between banks on which grew thousands of willows: he had no idea where the Pure Splendor Grange might be.

Indeed:

Endless expanses stretched out in his gaze;

The embankment had vanished amid willows and haze.

Chapter 79

1101

Journey to the West

When he could not find the grange the Great Sage Sun made a spell with his hands, said the magic word " *Om*"

and summoned the local deity, who approached shivering and shaking, fell to his knees and called out, "Great Sage, the local god of Willow Bank kowtows to you."

"Don't be afraid," Monkey said, "I'm not going to hit you. Tell me this: is there a Pure Splendor Grange on Willow Hill? And where is it?"

"There is a Pure Splendor Cave," the local deity replied, "but there has never been a Pure Splendor Grange. I suppose you have come from Bhiksuland, Great Sage."

"Yes, yes," Monkey replied. "The king of Bhiksuland was hoodwinked by an evil spirit till I turned up, saw through the monster, defeated him and drove him away. He turned into a beam of cold light and I don't know where he went. When I asked the king of Bhiksuland about it he told me that when the demon first presented him with the girl three years ago he asked the spirit about his background. The demon said that he lived in Pure Splendor Grange on Willow Hill twenty miles South of the city. I've found this place with its wooded hill but can't see any Pure Splendor Grange. That's why I asked you about it."

"I beg your forgiveness, Great Sage," said the local god, kowtowing. "This is part of the domain of the king of Bhiksuland, and I should have kept a closer watch on things. But the evil spirit had such terrible magical powers. If I had given away what he was doing he would have come and given me a bad time. That is why he has never been caught. Now that you are here, Great Sage, you need only go to the foot of the nine–forked willow on the Southern bank, walk round it three times to the left and three times to the right, hit the tree with both hands and shout 'Open up' three times. The Pure Splendor Cave Palace will then appear."

On learning this the Great Sage sent the local god away again, jumped over the stream with Pig and went to look for that willow tree. There was indeed a tree with nine forks on a single trunk. "Stand well back,"

Monkey ordered Pig, "while I make the gates open. When I've found the demon and chased him out you're to help."

In response to this order Pig took up his stand about three hundred yards from the tree while the Great Sage followed the local god's advice and went round the tree three times to the left and three times to the right then hit it with both hands, shouting, "Open up! Open up!" An instant later a pair of double doors opened with a noisy whoosh and the tree was nowhere to be seen. Inside the doors was bright light of many colours but no sign of human life. Confident in his divine might, Monkey charged in. He could see that it was a fine place: Shimmering clouds, from which

Sun and moon stole their brightness.

White clouds billowing from the caves,

Bright green lichens running wild in the courtyard.

Along the path rare flowers competed in beauty,

While plants on the steps vied in fragrant blossom.

Chapter 79

1102

Journey to the West

Warm was the air

Where it was ever spring.

This was just like a fairyland,

Or Penglai, the paradise of immortals.

Creepers grew all over the benches;

Vines ran wild across the bridge.

Bees flew into the cave carrying flowers;

Butterflies flirted with orchids as they passed the screen of stone.

Hurrying forward for a closer look Monkey saw that on the stone screen was carved IMMORTAL PALACE

OF PURE SPLENDOR. Unable to restrain himself, he jumped over the stone screen to see the old monster embracing a beautiful woman and telling her breathlessly what had happened in Bhiksuland.

"That was our chance," they said together. "Three years' efforts should have paid off today, but that ape's ruined everything."

Monkey charged up to them, brandishing his cudgel and shouting, "I'll get you, you fools. What do you mean, that was your chance? Take that!" Pushing the woman aside, the old monster swung his dragon −headed stick to block the cudgel. It was a fine battle that the two of them fought in front of the cave, and quite unlike the previous one:

The upraised cudgel spat out golden light;

Vicious vapors came from the swinging staff.

The monster said,

"How dare you in your ignorance come to my home?"

Monkey replied,

"I intend to subdue evil monsters."

Chapter 79

1103

Journey to the West

Said the monster,

"My love for the king was no business of yours,

So why did you come to bully and interfere?"

Answered Monkey,

"A compassionate monk should bring misrule to an end:

We could not endure the slaughter of children."

As they flung words at each other hostility grew:

Staff parried cudgel as blows struck at the heart.

Precious flowers were destroyed as they fought for their lives; Green moss became slippery when trampled underfoot.

Pale grew the light in the cave as they struggled:

Crushed were the fragrant blooms on the crags.

At the clash of their weapons the birds dared not fly;

Their shouts sent the beauties all running in terror.

Only the monster and Monkey were left

To stir up a hurricane that roared over the earth.

Slowly their battle took them out of the cave

Where Wuneng gave play to his mindless wrath.

The sound of the commotion they were making inside so excited Pig where he was waiting outside that his heart itched. As he could get no relief from scratching he raised his rake, smashed the nine–forked willow to the ground, then hit it several times so hard that blood gushed straight out with a barely audible sound. "This tree's become a spirit," he said, "this tree's a spirit." Pig had just raised his rake for another blow when he saw Monkey drawing the monster after him. Without another word the idiot rushed forward, raised his rake and

struck. The old monster was already finding Monkey too much to cope with, so that Pig's rake made him more desperate than ever. Abandoning the fight he shook himself, turned back into a beam of cold light, and headed East again. The two of them would not let the demon go but headed Eastwards in pursuit.

Above the shouts of battle they heard the calls of the phoenix and the crane and looked up to see that it was the Star of Longevity from the Southern pole of the heavens. Placing a cover over the cold light the old man called out, "Don't be in such a hurry, Great Sage; stop chasing

him now, Marshal Tian Peng. This old Taoist offers his greetings."

Monkey returned his courtesy and asked, "Where have you come from, Longevity my brother?"

"You've capped the cold light, so you must have caught the monster, old fat chops," said Pig with a grin.

"Here he is, here he is," said the Star of Longevity, smiling back. "I trust you two gentlemen will spare his life."

"The old devil's nothing to do with you, brother," said Monkey, "so why have you come to plead for him?"

"He's a messenger of mine," replied the star with a smile. "I carelessly let him escape to become a monster here."

"Since he's yours make him turn back into what he really looks like for us to see," said Monkey.

The Star of Longevity then let the cold light out and shouted, "Evil beast! Turn back into yourself at once if you want to be spared the death penalty." The demon turned himself round and revealed that he was really a white deer. Picking the staff up the Star of Longevity said, "You've even stolen my staff, evil beast." The deer lay down in submission, unable to speak, but only kowtowing and weeping. Look at him: Brindled like a tablet of jade,

And carrying a pair of seven – branched antlers.

When hungry he used to find the herb garden;

On mornings when thirsty he drank from the misty stream.

In his lengthening years he had taught himself to fly

And through many a day had mastered transformation.

Now that he heard the call of his master

He resumed his own form and lay down in the dust.

Thanking Monkey, the Star of Longevity mounted his deer and was just leaving when Monkey grabbed hold of him and said, "Not so fast, brother. There are a couple more jobs still to be done."

Chapter 79

"What jobs?" the star asked.

"The girl hasn't been caught yet and I don't know what sort of monster she is," Monkey replied. "We've also got to go back to Bhiksuland together to see the deluded ruler and show him what they really are."

"In that case I'll be patient," the star replied. "You and Marshal Tian Peng can go down into the cave to capture the girl and take her back to show the king what she really is."

"Just wait a little while," said Monkey. "We'll soon be back."

Pig then summoned up his spirits and went straight into the Immortal Palace of Pure Splendor with Monkey.

"Catch the evil spirit," he shouted, "catch the evil spirit." Hearing this great roar the beauty, who was trembling with fear and unable to escape, rushed behind the stone screen, but there was no rear exit.

"Where do you think you're going?" Pig shouted. "I'll get you, you man – trap, you whore spirit. Try my rake!"

As the beauty was unarmed she could not fight back, so she dodged the blow and turned herself into a beam of cold light and fled, only to be stopped by the Great Sage, who with two thumping blows of his cudgel knocked her off her feet and laid her low in the dust. She turned back into her real form as a white – faced vixen. Unable to restrain himself, the idiot lifted his rake and struck her a blow on the head. The great beauty of so many smiles was now a hairy fox.

"Don't smash her to pulp," Monkey said, "keep her in that shape to show her to the deluded king." The idiot grabbed her by the tail, not minding the filth, and dragged her out through the cave entrance with Monkey.

Here he saw the Star of Longevity stroking the deer's head and giving him a dressing – down.

"Evil beast," he was saying, "why did you run away from me and come here to turn yourself into a spirit? If I hadn't turned up the Great Sage Sun would certainly have killed you."

"What's that you're saying, brother?" asked Monkey, springing out of the cave.

"I was telling the deer off," the star explained, "telling the deer off."

Throwing the body of the dead fox in front of the deer, Pig said, "Your daughter, I suppose."

The deer nodded then stretched its head out to sniff the body and whimpered as if with grief at its bereavement until the Star of Longevity cuffed its head and said, "Evil beast. You're lucky to have got away with your life. What are you sniffing her for?" He then took off the belt he wore round his gown, fastened it round the deer's neck, and led it off with the words, "Great Sage, let's go to Bhiksuland."

"Wait a moment," said Monkey, "I feel like cleaning the whole place up so that no other evil creatures can ever live here again."

When Pig heard this he raised his rake and started to smash the willow down wildly. Monkey then said the magic word " *Om*" and summoned the local deity once more. "Gather some dried firewood," Monkey ordered him, "and start a roaring fire that will rid this place of yours of evil. Then you won't be bullied any more."

The local deity then turned around and with a roaring negative wind led his spirit soldiers to gather all sorts of withered vegetation that had dried out since the previous year: frostbitten grass, autumn grass, knotweed grass, mountain grass, dragonbone grass, rushes and reeds. Once set alight they would burn like oil or grease.

Chapter 79

1106

Journey to the West

"There's no need to go knocking trees over, Pig," said Monkey. "Fill the mouth of the cave with all this and set it alight: that'll burn the place clean out." And indeed once they were lit they turned the evil demons' Pure Splendor home into a fiery furnace. Only then did Monkey dismiss the local god and go with the Star of Longevity as they dragged the fox to the steps of the throne hall where he said to the king, "Here's your Queen Beauty. Do you want to fool around with her now?"

This caused the king a terrible shock. At the sight of the Great Sage

Monkey bringing the Star of Longevity with the white deer before the throne hall, monarch, ministers, consorts and queens all dropped to the ground to kowtow. Monkey went up to the king and held him up. "Don't kowtow to me," he said with a smile. "This deer is the Elder of the Nation. It's him you should be kowtowing to."

The king was now so overcome with shame that he could only say, "Thank you, holy monk, for saving the boys in my kingdom. It truly was an act of heavenly kindness." He then ordered the department of foreign relations to prepare a vegetarian feast, had the Eastern hall of the palace opened up and invited the star, the Ancient of the Southern Pole, to take part in a thanksgiving feast with the Tang Priest and his three disciples.

Sanzang bowed in greeting to the Star of Longevity, as did Friar Sand.

"If the white deer is one of your creatures, Star of Longevity," they both asked, "how did he get here to become such a nuisance?"

"Some time ago the Lord of Eastern Splendor came to my mountain," the Star of Longevity replied with a smile, "and I persuaded him to sit down for some chess. The wicked creature escaped before our first game was over. It was only when I couldn't find him after my visitor had gone that I worked out by calculating on my fingers that he must have come here. I had just reached here in my search for him when I met the Great Sage Sun using his mighty powers. If I had been any later this beast would be dead." Before he could finish his remarks it was announced that the banquet was ready. It was a splendid vegetarian feast: The room was overflowing with color;

Exotic fragrances filled the hall.

Embroidered hangings made the tables magnificent;

Red carpets on the floor shimmered like the glow of dawn.

From duck – shaped censers

Curled the scented smoke of eaglewood;

Before the king's place

Were fragrant vegetables.

See how high the towers of fruit were piled;

Sugar dragons and prowling animals.

Molded mandarin ducks,

Chapter 79

1107

Journey to the West

Lion confections,

Looking quite lifelike.

Parrot goblets,

Cormorant ladles,

Shaped like the real thing.

Every kind of fruit in abundance,

Each exquisite dish a delicacy.

Giant longans and tender bamboo—shoots,

Fresh lichees and peaches.

Sweet smelled the jujubes and persimmon cakes;

More fragrant than wine were the pine—nuts and grapes.

Many a sweet dish made with honey,

Steamed pastries of various kinds,

Sugar—drenched doughnuts

Piled up like bouquets of flowers,

Mountains of rolls on golden dishes,

Fragrant rice heaped high in silver bowls,

Long bean noodles in hot chili soup,

Tasty dishes came in succession.

There was no end of button mushrooms,

"Tree – ear" fungus,

Tender bamboo shoots,

Sealwort,

Vegetables of many flavors,

A hundred kinds of rare delights.

They came and went in endless succession,

All the abundant dishes offered at the feast.

The seating was arranged on the spot, the seat of honour going to the Star of Longevity and the next best place to the Tang Priest. The king sat between them while Brother Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand sat at the side places. There were also three senior ministers present to keep them company, and the musicians and singers of the court theatre were ordered to perform. Holding his purple cloud goblet, the king, toasted them one by one.

The only person who would not drink was the Tang Priest. "Brother," said Pig to Monkey, "I'll leave the fruit for you, but you must let me have a good feed of the soup, bread and rice." With no further thought the idiot ate everything all at once. He devoured everything that was brought in and left nothing behind.

When the banquet was coming to an end the Star of Longevity took his leave of them. The king went up to him, knelt, kowtowed and begged the star to tell him the secret of eliminating disease and prolonging life. "I didn't bring any elixir as I was here to search for my deer," the Star of Longevity replied. "I would like to teach you the techniques of self – cultivation, but you are so weak in body and ruined in spirit that you would not be able to convert the elixir. All I have in my sleeve is these three jujubes that I was intending to offer to the Lord of Eastern Splendor to take with tea. As they haven't been eaten I can offer them to you now."

The king swallowed them, and he gradually began to feel lighter in body as the illness was cured. This was the origin of his later success in achieving immortality. As soon as Pig saw this he called, "Longevity, old pal, if you've got any fire jujubes give me some."

"I didn't bring any," the star replied, "but I'll give you several pounds of them next time." The Star of Longevity then went out of the Eastern pavilion, expressed his thanks, called to the white deer, sprang on his back and departed by cloud. We will not relate how the king, queens and consorts in the palace and the common people in the city all burnt incense and kowtowed.

"Disciples," said Sanzang, "let us pack up and take our leave of His Majesty." The king pleaded with them to stay and instruct him. "Your Majesty," said Monkey, "from now on you should be less greedy for your sexual pleasures and accumulate more hidden merit. In whatever you do you should use your strong points to make up for your weaknesses. This is the way to get rid of your illness and prolong your life. That's what we'll tell you." Two dishes full of small pieces of gold and silver were then offered to the pilgrims to help with the expenses of their journey, but the Tang Priest refused to accept a single penny. The king then had no choice but to order the royal carriage and invite the Tang Priest to sit in the dragon and phoenix coach while he, his queens and his consorts pushed the wheels. Thus they escorted him out of the palace. In the streets and markets the common people also came with bowls of pure water and incense–burners to see them on their way from the city.

Suddenly there was the sound of a wind in the sky and 1,111 goose coops landed on both sides of the road.

The little boys in them were crying. Unseen in the sky were the deities who had been looking after them: the city and the local gods, the deities of the altars, the True Officials, the Guardians of the Four Quarters and the Centre, the Four Duty Gods, the Six Dings and Six Jias, the Protectors of the Faith and the rest of them, who all responded with a loud shout of, "Great Sage, on your earlier instructions we carried the boys away in the goose coops. Now that we have learned of your success in your task and your departure we have brought every one of them back again." The king, his queens and consorts and all his ministers and subjects fell to their knees to kowtow.

Chapter 79

"Thank you for your efforts, gentlemen," Monkey shouted to the sky. "Please all return to your shrines now.

I'll get the people to make thanksgiving offerings to you." With a soughing noise the magic wind then arose again and departed.

Monkey then told the people of the city to come and collect their children. The news was spread at once, and the people all came to claim the boys in the baskets. They were very happy indeed. Holding the boys in their arms they called them dear ones and darlings. Dancing and laughing they told their children to take hold of the lords from Tang and bring them home so that they could express their thanks for the boys' rescue. Nobody, young or old, male or female, was frightened by the disciples' ugly faces as they all carried Pig, Friar Sand, Monkey and the Tang Priest back to the city in the middle of a crowd that also brought their luggage and led the horse. The king could not stop them. Family after family laid on a banquet or a feast, and those who could not offer hospitality made monkish hats, shoes, tunics, cotton socks, and other inner and outer garments in different sizes that they presented to the pilgrims. Only when they had been entertained in this way for nearly a month were the travelers able to leave the city. Portraits of them were painted and tablets bearing their names set up; to these the people could kowtow, burn incense and make offerings. Indeed: Great was the gratitude for their enormous kindness,

In saving the lives of infants by the thousand.

If you don't know what happened later listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 80

The Young Girl Seeks a Mate to Build Up the Male

Protecting His Master the Mind — Ape Sees Through a Demon

The story tells how the king, ministers and common people of Bhiksuland escorted the Tang Priest and his three disciples out of the city. Seven miles later they were still unwilling to part from the pilgrims, but Sanzang insisted on getting out of the coach, mounting the horse and taking his leave of them. The people who had been

seeing him off did not return to the city until the travelers had vanished from view.

When the four had been travelling for a long time the winter and the spring too were over. There was no end of wild flowers and mountain trees to be seen; fragrant blossoms filled the view. To Sanzang's alarm another towering mountain appeared in front of them.

"Disciples," he asked, "is there a way across the high mountain before us? We must be careful."

"Master," laughed Brother Monkey, "that's not what a seasoned traveler should be saying. You sound much more like some pampered prince trying to look at the whole sky from the bottom of a well. As the old saying goes, a mountain can't stop the road: it can find its own way across. So why ask whether there's a way?"

"Even if this mountain cannot block the road," Sanzang replied, "I am afraid that there may be monsters on the mountain precipices and evil spirits that will emerge from its deep recesses."

Chapter 80

1110

Journey to the West

"Don't worry," said Pig, "don't worry. We're not far from Paradise here. I guarantee it'll all be nice and peaceful— —there won't be any trouble." As they were talking master and disciples reached the foot of the mountain without even noticing. Taking out his gold—banded cudgel Monkey climbed the rock—face.

"Master," he called, "there's a path that goes round the mountain. The going's very easy. Hurry up!" The Tang Priest now put his worries aside and whipped the horse forward. "Carry the luggage for a while, brother," said Friar Sand to Pig, who did so while Friar Sand held the horse's reins and the master sat in the carved saddle.

They hurried along the main path up the steep slope after Monkey. This was what the mountain looked like: The peak was wrapped in clouds;

Torrents rushed down ravines.

The paths were heavy with the scent of flowers,

And dense grew the countless trees.

Blue were the gages, white the plums,

Green the willows and red the peaches.

Spring was all but over where the cuckoo sang;

When fledgling swallows chirped the festival was finished.

Craggy boulders,

Blue – green pines shaped like parasols.

The track leading across the ridge

Climbed high over a tracery of rocks;

The beetling precipice

Was overgrown with creepers, grass and trees.

Peaks like a row of halberds vied in elegance;

Far from the ocean wave streams competed in gullies.

As the master was taking an unhurried look at the mountain scenery he was moved to homesickness by the sound of a bird singing. "Disciples," he said,

"After receiving His Majesty's command

Chapter 80

1111

Journey to the West

I was given my passport in front of the brocade screen.

Watching lanterns on the fifteenth night I left the Eastern land, And then was parted from the emperor of Tang.

Just when the dragon and tiger winds both met

I and my disciples had to struggle with the horse.

Twelve may be the peaks of Mount Wu;

But when shall I face and see you again?'"

"Master," said Monkey, "you're always suffering from homesickness. You're not like a monk at all. Stop worrying and keep going: don't upset yourself so. As the old saying goes, you've got to work hard if you want to be rich and successful."

"What you say is quite right, disciple," said Sanzang, "but I do not know where the road to the West runs."

"Master," said Pig, "it's all because our Tathagata Buddha can't bring himself to give those scriptures away.

He must have removed the path because he knows we're coming to fetch them. Why else can't we get to the end of the journey?"

"Don't talk such nonsense," said Friar Sand. "Just keep going with big brother. As long as we stick with him we're bound to get there in the end."

As they were talking master and disciples came in sight of a great expanse of dark pine forest. In his fear the Tang Priest called out, "Wukong, no sooner have we taken that precipitous track over the mountain than we come to this deep, dark pine forest. Why? We must be careful."

"There's nothing to be scared of," said Monkey.

"Nonsense," said Sanzang. "Never trust what appears to be absolutely upright, and be on your guard against evil masquerading as goodness. I have been through quite a few pine woods with you, but never one as vast and deep as this. Just look at the trees:

Dense – packed to East and West,

In lines to North and South.

Dense – packed to East and West they reach the end of the clouds; In lines to North and South they touch the azure firmament.

Thorns and brambles grow close – tangled all about;

Knotweed wraps itself around the branches.

Liana coils round kudzu vine,

Kudzu coils around liana.

Where liana coils around kudzu

Travelers cannot move between East and West;

Where kudzu coils round liana

Merchants may not ply between North and South.

In this forest

You could spend half a year,

Not knowing whether sun or moon was out,

Or travel for miles

And never see the stars.

Where the outlook is to the North the view is unbounded;

On Southern slopes the bushes are in flower.

There are thousand – year – old locust trees,

Ten – thousand – year – old junipers,

Pines that endure the winter cold,

Mountain peaches that bear fruit,

Wild peonies,

And hibiscus,

All growing in a close – packed profusion,

So wild that not even a god could paint it.

Bird – song could be heard:

Parrots shrieking,

Cuckoos calling,

Magpies in the branches,

Chapter 80

1113

Journey to the West

Crows feeding their mothers,

Orioles with their aerial dance,

As the mynas adjust their voices.

Quails singing,

Swallows chirping,

Mynas imitating people,

And thrushes that could recite sutras.

Then there were:

Great beasts swishing their tails,

Tigers gnashing their teeth.

Aged foxes and raccoon – dogs disguised as ladies,

Ancient gray wolves at whose baying the forest shook.

Had the Pagoda – carrying Heavenly King come here

His power to suppress demons would have been of no avail.

The Great Sage Sun was unafraid. Clearing the way ahead with his cudgel, he led the Tang Priest into the depths of the forest.

They had been travelling in this carefree style for many hours without seeing any sign of a way out of the forest when the Tang Priest called out, "Disciples, we have been through no end of steep and dangerous mountain woods on our journey West. Thank goodness we have found this purity and elegance and a smooth path. The rare and unusual flowers here are truly delightful. I intend to sit here for a moment to let the horse have a rest. I am, besides, famished. Go and beg me some

meat – free food from somewhere."

"Master," said Monkey, "please dismount while I go begging." This the venerable elder did. While Pig tied the horse to a tree Friar Sand put the luggage down, brought out the begging – bowl and handed it to Monkey.

"Sit still here, Master," Monkey said, "and don't even say the word 'fear'. I'll be back in a moment." While Sanzang sat upright in the shade of the pines Pig and Friar Sand amused themselves looking for flowers and fruit.

Let us tell of the Great Sage who somersaulted into mid air, brought his cloud to a hall and looked back. All he could see coming from the pine forest were auspicious clouds and auras that coiled and spread all around.

"Good, good," he found himself saying. Do you know why? He was expressing his admiration for the Tang Priest, the reincarnation of the Venerable Golden Cicada and a holy man who had cultivated his conduct for ten successive lifetimes, which explained there was such an aura of good omen above his head.

Chapter 80

1114

Journey to the West

"Five hundred years ago, when I made havoc in heaven," Monkey thought, "I wandered to the very corners of the oceans and ran wild at the end of the sky. I led a host of spirits and called myself the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. We subdued dragons and tigers, and I took us off the registers of death. I used to wear a triple golden crown and a coat of golden mail, and with my gold – banded cudgel in my hands and my cloud – treading shoes on my feet I had 47,000 demons under me. They all used to call me Lord Great Sage. I really was someone in those days. But ever since being rescued from Heaven's punishment I've been a small – time nobody as his disciple. I reckon that as the master has such an aura of auspicious clouds over his head things are sure to turn out well for us on our way back to the East and I'm bound to win the true achievement."

As Brother Monkey was congratulating himself along these lines he saw a column of black vapor rising from the South of the forest. "That black vapor means evil for sure," he thought with alarm. "No black

vapors could come from our Pig or Friar Sand."

While the Great Sage was still trying to make out exactly what the vapors were coming from, Sanzang was sitting in the forest clarifying his mind and contemplating the Buddha－nature as he recited the *Mahaprajnaparamita Heart Sutra* when suddenly he heard a high －pitched cry of "Help!"

"This is all very well," said Sanzang with astonishment, "but who could that be calling so deep in the forest?"

It must be someone terrified by a wolf, a tiger, a leopard or some other wild beast. I shall go to take a look."

The venerable elder rose to his feet and walked through the thousand －year－old cypresses and even more ancient pines, holding on to vines and creepers, as he went close enough to see a woman tied to a big tree. The top half of her body was bound to the trunk with creepers and her lower half buried in the ground. Sanzang stopped to ask, "Why are you tied up here, lady Bodhisattva?"

It was quite obvious that the wretched creature was an evil monster, but with his mortal eyes in a worldling's body Sanzang was unable to perceive this. The monster's response to the question was to weep copiously. Just look at the tears rolling down her peachy cheeks. She was so lovely that fish would have sunk and wild geese fallen out of the sky at the sight of her; the beauty of her sorrowing and sparkling eyes would have made the moon hide away and put the flowers to shame. Sanzang did not dare go any closer to her as he opened his mouth to ask, "What crime have you committed, lady Bodhisattva? Tell me so that I can rescue you."

The evil spirit then quickly put together a pack of lies as she replied, "Master, my home is in the country of Pinpo, which is some seventy miles from here. Both my parents are at home, and they are very great lovers of goodness. All their lives they have been on good terms with their relations and devoted to their friends. At the Clear and Bright Festival they invited all their relations and members of their own family to pay their respects at and sweep the ancestral graves. A whole procession of carrying－chairs and horses all went to the graves in the wilds outside the city. Here we set out our offerings and had just burnt the paper models of horses when a band of brigands sprang upon us with the sound of gongs and drums. They charged us shouting 'kill!' My parents and relations all got hold of horses and carrying －chairs and fled for their lives. Because I am so young I was too

frightened to run: I just collapsed and was carried back to the mountains by the brigands. The top chieftain wanted me for his lady, the number two chieftain wanted me for his woman, and the third and fourth ones both fancied me for my looks. There were seventy or eighty of them all quarrelling over me and none of them would give way. So they tied me up here in the forest and broke up the band. I've been here for five days and five nights now and I'm only just alive now. I'll soon be dead. Goodness only knows which ancestor however many generations back accumulated the virtue that brought you here to me today, reverend sir. I beg you in your great mercy to save my life. I won't forget your goodness to me even when I lie dead under the nine springs of the underworld." When she had finished speaking her tears flowed like rain.

Chapter 80

1115

Journey to the West

As Sanzang really did have a merciful heart he could not help weeping and sobbing himself. "Disciples," he shouted. Pig and Friar Sand were still looking for flowers and fruit in the forest when suddenly they heard their master's anguished cry.

"Friar Sand," said the idiot, "the master's found a relation here."

"What nonsense, brother," said Friar Sand with a smile. "In all the time we've been going we haven't met a single good person, so where could any relation of his have come from?"

"If it's not a relation why's the master crying for them?" Pig asked, adding, "You and I had better go to take a look." Friar Sand did indeed go back to where they had been before. Leading the horse and carrying the luggage they went up to the master and asked, "What's up, Master?"

The Tang Priest pointed at the tree as he replied, "Pig, untie this lady Bodhisattva and save her life." Without caring whether this was the right or the wrong thing to do, the idiot set to.

The Great Sage meanwhile saw from up in the air the dense black vapors completely obscuring the auspicious glow. "This is bad," he said, "this is bad. If the black vapors are covering the auspicious glow that means something evil is threatening my master. Never mind about begging for food— —I'm going back to see the master." He

turned his cloud back and landed in the forest, where he saw Pig recklessly untying the ropes.

Going up to him Monkey grabbed an ear and threw him to the ground. "The master told me to rescue her," the idiot protested, looking up to see Monkey as he scrambled back to his feet, "so why did you push me over like that? You're just throwing your weight about."

"Brother," replied Monkey with a smile, "don't untie her. She's an evil spirit who's been putting on an act to fool us."

"Wretched ape," shouted Sanzang, "talking nonsense again. How can you possibly take a girl like this for an evil spirit?"

"There's something you don't know, Master." Monkey replied. "In the old days I tried all these tricks myself when I wanted some human flesh. You couldn't possibly tell what she is."

"Master," said Pig, pouting sulkily, "don't let that Protector of the Horses take you in. She's a local girl. We've never had dealings with her before on our long journey from the East and she's no relation or in-law of ours, so how can you say she's an evil spirit? He's trying to get rid of us by making us go ahead so he can turn a somersault and get back here by magic. Then he's going to have a bit of fun with her and ruin our reputation."

"You cretin," shouted Brother Monkey, "stop talking such rubbish. I've never done any such outrageous thing on all our journey to the West. I reckon it must have been some reckless womanizer like yourself who forgot his principles when he saw a good chance. I expect you tricked some family into taking you as their son-in-law and tied her up here."

"That's enough of that," said Sanzang, "that's enough. Now then, Bajie. Your elder brother usually sees things very clearly. Ignore what he is saying. Let us be on our way."

"Splendid," said Monkey with great delight, "you have a good destiny, Master. Please mount. Once we're out of the pine forest there will be a house where we can beg for some food for you." The four of them then pressed on together, leaving the monster behind.

Chapter 80

The story tells how the monster gnashed her teeth with fury as she was left tied there to the tree. "I've heard tell of Sun Wukong's tremendous magic powers for years," she said, "and now that I've seen him today I know that his reputation's well–founded. As that Tang Priest has been cultivating his conduct ever since he was a boy he has never lost a drop of his primal masculinity. I was longing to mate with him so that I could become a golden immortal of the Supreme Ultimate. I never expected that monkey to see through my magic and save him. If I'd been untied and released I could have carried him off whenever I chose and he'd have been mine.

Now that Sun Wukong has made those damaging remarks and taken the Tang Priest away my efforts have all been for nothing. Let's see what happens when I give him another couple of shouts."

Not shifting her ropes, the evil spirit made the most of the wind being in the right direction to carry some high–pitched words of morality into the Tang Priest's ear. Do you know what she was shouting? "Master," she called, "if you forget your conscience and refuse to save a living being's life what's the use of your fetching the scriptures from the Buddha?"

When the Tang Priest heard this call he reined the horse in and said, "Wukong, go and rescue that girl."

"You've started on your way, Master," Monkey replied. "What made you think of her again?"

"She is shouting again there," the Tang Priest said.

"Did you hear, Pig?" Monkey asked.

"My big lugs cover my ear–holes," Pig replied, "and I didn't hear anything."

"Did you hear, Friar Sand?"

"I was walking ahead, carrying the pole with the luggage," Friar Sand replied. "I wasn't paying attention and I didn't hear anything either."

"Neither did I," said Monkey. "What did she say, Master? You were the only one who heard."

"What she called was quite right," the Tang Priest called. "She asked

what was the use of fetching scriptures when I went to visit the Buddha if I forgot my conscience and refused to save a living being's life. To save a human life is better than building a seven – storied pagoda. Rescuing her straight away would be even better than worshipping the Buddha and fetching the scriptures."

"If you're wanting to be charitable, Master," Monkey replied, "you're incurable. Just think of all the demons you've met in all the mountains you've crossed on your journey West since leaving the East. They've often taken you into their caves and I've had to rescue you. I've killed tens of thousands of them with this iron cudgel of mine. So why can't you bring yourself to let a single devil die today? Why do you have to rescue her?"

"Disciple," the Tang Priest replied, "there's an old saying, 'Do not fail to do a good deed because it is small; do not commit a bad deed because it is small.' You're still to go and save her."

"If that's the way you're going to be, Master, I can't accept that responsibility," Monkey replied. "You insist on rescuing her and I dare not try too hard to dissuade you. When I did make a little attempt to do so you lost your temper again. You can go and rescue her if you want to."

"Watch your tongue, ape," Sanzang retorted. "Sit here while Bajie and I go to rescue her."

The Tang Priest went back into the forest and told Pig to undo the ropes around the top half of her body and dig the lower half out with his rake. The demon stamped her feet, fastened her skirt and happily followed the Tang Priest out of the pine forest. When she met Monkey all he did was to wear a mocking smile.

"Impudent ape," said the Tang Priest abusively, "what are you smiling at?"

"I'm laughing at you," Monkey replied:

"You meet up with good friends when your luck is going well; And when it's going badly you find yourself a belle."

"Impudent macaque!" said Sanzang, being abusive again. "What nonsense! I have been a monk ever since I came out of my mother's womb. I am now making this journey West at His Majesty's command with the devout intention of worshipping the Buddha and fetching the scriptures. I am not the sort of person to care about wealth and office, so what do you mean by my luck going badly?"

"Master," replied Monkey with a grin, "you may have been a monk since you were a child, and you may be good at reading sutras and invoking the Buddha, but you have never studied the text of royal laws. This girl is young and beautiful. If monks like us travel with her we may well meet with evil people who arrest us and turn us in to the authorities. They won't care about worshipping Buddhas or fetching scriptures. They'll treat it as a case of illicit sex, and even if that isn't proved we'll still be convicted of abduction. You will lose your ordination license, Master, and be beaten half to death. Pig will be sent into exile and Friar Sand sentenced to penal servitude. Even I won't get off scot–free. No matter how I try to talk my way out of it I'll still be found guilty of wrongdoing."

"Don't talk such rubbish," Sanzang shouted. "After all, I did save her life. There will be no trouble. We are taking her with us. I will be responsible for whatever happens."

"You may say you'll be responsible, Master," Monkey replied, "but what you don't realize is that so far from rescuing her you're destroying her."

"I saved her life by rescuing her from the forest," said Sanzang, "so how can I be destroying her?"

"If she had stayed tied up in the forest without any food for three to five days, ten days or even half a month and starved to death," said Monkey, "she would at least have gone to the Underworld with her body in one piece. But now you've taken her away from there. You're on a fast horse and travelling like the wind. The rest of us have to follow you. How will she be able to keep up on her tiny feet? She can barely walk. If she gets left behind and a wolf, a tiger or a leopard eats her up you'll have killed her."

"You are right," Sanzang said. "Thank you for thinking of it. What are we to do about it?"

"Lift her up and let her ride on the horse with you," replied Monkey with a grin.

"I could not possibly ride on the same horse as her," moaned Sanzang.

"Then how is she to travel?" Monkey asked. "Bajie can carry her on his back," Sanzang replied.

Chapter 80

1118

Journey to the West

"You're in luck, idiot," said Monkey.

"There's no such thing as a light load on a long journey," Pig replied. "Having to carry her isn't luck."

"With your long snout you'll be able to turn it round and chat her up on the quiet while you're carrying her,"

Monkey replied, "which will be very convenient for you."

Pig's reaction to hearing this was to beat his chest and jump about in fury. "That's terrible," he said, "that's terrible, I'd sooner put up with the pain of a flogging from the master. If I carry her I won't possibly come out of it clean. You've always been a slanderer. I'm not carrying her."

"Very well then," Sanzang said, "very well then. I can walk a little further. I shall come down and walk slowly with you. Bajie can lead the horse with nobody riding it."

"You've got yourself a good bargain there, idiot," said Monkey, roaring with laughter. "The master's done you a favour by letting you lead the horse."

"You are talking nonsense again, ape," said Sanzang. "As the ancients said, 'When a horse is to travel three hundred miles it cannot get there by itself.' If I walk slowly are you going to leave me behind? When I go slowly you will have to go slowly too. We shall all take the lady Bodhisattva down the mountain together. We can leave her in some convent, temple, monastery or house that we come to. Then we will still have rescued her."

"You're right, Master," Monkey replied. "Let's press on quickly."

Sanzang took the lead while Friar Sand carried the luggage, Pig led the riderless horse and the girl, and Monkey carried his iron cudgel as

they carried on together. Within seven to ten miles the evening was drawing in and a tall building came into sight.

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "that must be a temple of some sort. We shall ask to spend the night here and be on our way first thing tomorrow."

"What you say is right, Master," said Monkey. "Let's all get a move on."

They were soon at the gates, where Sanzang told them, "Keep well out of the way while I go in first to ask if we can stay for the night. If it looks suitable I shall send someone to call to you." So they all stood in the shadows of the poplars while Monkey kept an eye on the girl, his iron cudgel in his hand.

The venerable elder walked forward to see that the gates were hanging crooked and falling to pieces. What he saw when he pushed the gates open chilled him to the heart:

The cloisters were deserted,

The ancient shrine left desolate.

The courtyard was overgrown with moss;

Sagebrush and brambles choked the paths.

Chapter 80

1119

Journey to the West

The only lanterns came from the fireflies

While the croaking of frogs had replaced the water–clock.

The venerable elder started crying. Indeed:

The desolate halls were falling down,

The lonely cloisters collapsing.

Broken bricks and tiles lay in a dozen heaps,

And all the pillars and beams were askew.

Grass was growing all around;

The kitchens were crumbling and buried in dust.

In derelict towers the drums had lost their skins;

Broken was the glass lamp.

The color had gone from the Buddha's golden statue;

The figures of arhats lay strewn upon the floor.

Guanyin had turned to mud in the soaking rain,

Her pure vase with a willow spray fallen to the ground.

No monk was to be seen there by day,

And only foxes slept there at night.

As the wind roared with the sound of thunder

This was a place for tiger and leopard to shelter.

The walls around had collapsed

And no gates could be closed to guard it.

There is a poem about this that goes

For many a year had the temple been unrepaired;

In its derelict state it had gone from bad to worse.

Chapter 80

1120

Journey to the West

The gales had destroyed the faces of the temple guardians,

And rainstorms had washed the heads off the Buddha statues.

The vajrapani had collapsed and been soaked through.

The local god had lost his shrine and stayed outside at night.

Two other things were even more depressing:

Bell and drums lay on the ground instead of hanging in their towers.

Summoning up his courage, Sanzang went in through the inner gates where he saw that the bell – tower and drum – tower had both collapsed, leaving only a single bronze bell planted in the ground, its bottom half the color of indigo. With the passage of the years the top half of the bell had been bleached in the rain while the earth's vapors had greened the lower part.

"Bell," Sanzang called aloud as he touched it,

"Once you roared from high in the tower,

Calling afar from the painted beam where you hung.

At cockcrow you used to ring in the dawn,

And at evening you announced the dusk.

Where now are the lay brothers who begged for the copper,

Or the craftsman who cast it to form you?

Both, I imagine, are now in the Underworld;

They have gone without trace and you are left silent."

The venerable elder's loud sighs had by now disturbed someone in the monastery. A lay brother who was offering incense heard the voice, climbed to his feet, picked up a broken brick and threw it at the bell. The bell's clang gave the venerable elder such a fright that he fell over then scrambled up again to flee, only to trip over the root of a tree and go flying again.

As he lay on the ground Sanzang raised his head and said, "Bell, I was just lamenting your fate

When suddenly you clanged.

On this deserted route to the West

Over the years you have turned into a spirit."

The lay brother came over to Sanzang and steadied him as he said, "Please get up, reverend sir. The bell hasn't become a spirit. It was I who struck it just now." Looking up and seeing how dark and ugly the other was Sanzang said, "I suppose you are a goblin or some other evil creature. I am no ordinary man. I come from Great Tang and I have disciples who can subdue dragons and tigers. If you run into them your life will be lost."

"Don't be afraid, my lord," replied the lay brother, falling to his knees. I'm no evil being. I'm a lay brother who looks after the incense here. When I heard those fine things you were saying just now I wanted to come out and welcome you but I was afraid that it might be some demon knocking at the gates. That was why I didn't dare come out until I'd thrown a piece of brick at the bell to calm my fears. Please rise, my lord."

Only then did Sanzang calm himself sufficiently to reply, "Lay brother, that fright was almost the death of me.

Take me inside." The lay brother led Sanzang straight in through the third pair of gates. What the Tang Priest saw here was quite different from outside:

A cloud – patterned wall built of blue bricks,

Halls roofed with green glazed tiles.

The holy statues were sheathed in gold,

The steps made of pure white jade.

Blue light danced in the Buddha hall;

Fine vapors rose from the Vairocana chapel.

Above the Manjusri hall

Were decorations of flying clouds;

In the Library of Scriptures

Were patterns of flowers and green leaves.

On the roof above the triple eaves stood a precious jar;

In the Tower of Five Blessings embroidered covers were spread.

A thousand bright bamboos waved over the dhyana seat;

Chapter 80

1122

Journey to the West

Ten thousand bluish pines threw their light on the gates.

Jade – coloured clouds reflected gold on this palace;

Auspicious clouds drifted round the woods full of purple mist.

Each morning the fragrant breezes could be smelled all around; In the evening painted drums were heard on the high hills.

There should be morning sunshine to patch torn robes;

How can the sutra be finished by the light of the moon?

The courtyard at the back is lit by half a wall of lamps;

A column of fragrant smoke shines in the hall.

Sanzang saw this but did not dare go inside. "Lay brother," he called, "why is the front of the monastery so dilapidated but the back so neat and tidy?"

"My lord," said the lay brother with a smile, "these mountains are full of evil creatures and brigands. On clear days they roam the mountains to rob and on dull ones they shelter in the monastery. They knock the Buddha statues down to use as seats and burn the wooden pillars for firewood. The monks here are too feeble to argue with them, which is why they have abandoned the wrecked buildings at the front for the brigands to stay in.

They have found some new benefactors to build the new monastery for them. Now there is one for the pure and one for the impure. This is how we do things in the West."

"So that is the way things are," said Sanzang.

As he walked further Sanzang saw written over the gate in large letters SEA – GUARDING MONASTERY

OF MEDITATION. Only then did he stride in through the gates, where a monk appeared coming towards him. Just see what the monk looked like:

His hat of velvet and brocade was held with a pin,

And a pair of bronze rings hung from his ears.

His tunic was made of woolen stuff,

And his eyes were white and bright as silver.

He held in his hand a self－beating drum

As he recited scriptures in an unknown tongue.

Sanzang did not know before

Chapter 80

1123

Journey to the West

That he was a lama on the road to the West.

As the lama came out he saw how very handsome and elegant Sanzang was: clear－browed and fine－eyed with a broad forehead and level top to his skull, ears hanging to his shoulders and arms so long they came below his knees. He looked like an arhat come down to earth. The lama, his face wreathed in smiles, went up to Sanzang chuckling with delight to grab hold of him, feel his hands and feet, rub his nose and tug at his ears as ways of showing his friendliness.

After leading Sanzang into the abbot's lodgings and going through the rituals of greeting the lama asked him,

"Where have you come from, venerable Father?"

"I have been sent by His Majesty the Emperor of Great Tang in the East to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures from Thunder Monastery in India in the West," Sanzang replied. "As we were passing this way when it was becoming dark I have come to your distinguished monastery to put up here for the night before leaving early tomorrow morning. I beg you to grant me this expeditious help."

"You shouldn't say that," replied the lama with a smile, "you shouldn't

say that. We didn't really want to become monks. We were all given life by our mothers and fathers and only cut our ties with them because we had unlucky destinies and our families could not afford to keep us. Even though we are now disciples of the Buddhist faith you must not talk empty words."

"I spoke in all sincerity," Sanzang replied.

"However far is the journey from the East to the Western Heaven?" the monk said. "Along the way there are mountains, there are caves in the mountains and there are spirits in the caves. I don't think that a lone traveler looking as delicate as you could possibly be a pilgrim going to fetch the scriptures."

"You are quite right, abbot," Sanzang replied. "I could never have got here alone. I have three disciples who clear my way across the mountains and build me bridges over rivers. It is only because they have protected me that I have been able to reach your monastery."

"Where are your three distinguished disciples?" the lama asked.

"Waiting outside the gates of the monastery," Sanzang replied.

"Father," said the lama with alarm, "you don't realize that there are dangerous tigers, wolves, evil bandits, ghosts and demons here. We don't dare roam far even by day and we shut the gates before nightfall. How can you leave people outside this late?" He then told his disciples to ask them in at once.

Two young lamas hurried outside. At the sight of Monkey they fell over, and then fell over again when they saw Pig. Scrambling to their feet they ran back in as fast as they could and said, "My lord, your luck is out.

Your disciples have disappeared. There are only three or four evil monsters standing outside the gates."

"What do they look like?" Sanzang asked.

"One has a face like a thunder god," the young lamas replied, "one has a face like a tilt—hammer, and one has a green face and terrible fangs. There is a girl with them too——she has oiled hair and a powdered face."

Chapter 80

"You would not know who they are," replied Sanzang with a smile. "The three ugly ones are my disciples and the girl is someone I rescued in the pine forest."

"My lord," the lama said, "how can a master as handsome as you have found yourself such ugly disciples?"

"Ugly they may be," Sanzang replied, "but they are all useful. Ask them in straight away. If you take any longer the one who looks like a thunder god is a bit of a trouble–maker. He was not born to a mother and father and he will fight his way in."

The young lamas then hurried outside again and fell to their knees, shivering and shaking, as they said, "My lords, Lord Tang invites you in."

"Brother," said Pig, "if he's invited us, that's that. Why are they shivering and shaking?"

"They're scared because we're so ugly," Monkey replied.

"Rubbish," said Pig. "We were born that way. None of us is ugly from choice."

"Make yourself look a bit less ugly," said Monkey, and the idiot really did tuck his snout into his tunic and keep his head down as he led the horse while Friar Sand carried the pole and Brother Monkey brought up the rear, holding his cudgel in his hand and dragging the girl along. They went past the ruined buildings and cloisters and in through the third part of gates. When they had tethered the horse they went into the abbot's lodgings to meet the lama and take their seats in order of precedence. The lama then went inside to lead seventy or eighty young lamas to greet them, tidy their rooms, give them a vegetarian meal and look after them. Indeed:

In storing up achievement be mindful of mercy;

When the Buddha's Dharma flourishes monks admire each other.

If you do not know how they left the monastery, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 81

The Mind – Ape Recognizes a Monster in the Monastery

The Three Search for Their Master in Black Pine Forest

The story tells how Sanzang and his disciples came to the Meditation Monastery where they met the lamas and were given a vegetarian meal. When the four of them had eaten the girl was also fed. By now night was gradually falling and the lamp was lit in the abbot's lodgings. The lamas, who wanted to ask the Tang Priest about why he was going to fetch the scriptures and were also eager for a look at the girl, stood packed together in rows under the lamp. "Abbot," said Sanzang to the lama he had first met, "when we leave your monastery tomorrow what will the road West be like?" Before answering, the lama fell to his knees. Sanzang quickly helped him up and said, "Stand up, please. Why do you greet me in this way when I ask about the road?"

Chapter 81

1125

Journey to the West

"When you travel West tomorrow, reverend sir, you will find that the road is level," the lama replied. "There is no need to worry. There is just one thing at present that is rather awkward. I wanted to tell you about it as soon as you came in, but I was afraid that it would offend your distinguished self. I only venture to tell you now that the meal is over that you will be most welcome to spend the night in the young lamas' room after your long, hard journey from the East. But it would not be right for the lady Bodhisattva to do so. I don't know where I should invite her to sleep."

"Your suspicions are not called for, abbot," Sanzang replied, "and you should not suppose that my disciples and I have wicked ideas. When we were coming through Black Pine Forest this morning we found this girl tied to a tree. My disciple Sun Wukong refused to save her, but out of my enlightened heart I rescued her and have brought her here for you to put up, abbot."

"As you have been so generous, reverend Father," the abbot replied, "we can set out a straw mattress behind the devarajas in the Devaraja Hall for her to sleep on."

"That's splendid," Sanzang said, "splendid." After this the young lamas took the girl to sleep in the back of the hall while in the abbot's lodgings Sanzang urged the officials of the monastery to put themselves at their ease, whereupon they all dispersed.

"We have had a hard day," Sanzang said to Brother Monkey. "We must go to bed early and be up early in the morning." They all slept in the same room, guarding the master and not daring to leave him. Later that night The moon rose high and all was peaceful;

The Street of Heaven was quiet and nobody moved.

Bright was the Silver River; the stars shone clearly;

The drum in the tower hastened the changing watch.

We will say nothing more of the night. When Monkey rose at first light he told Pig and Friar Sand to get the luggage and the horse ready then urged the master to start out. But Sanzang wanted to sleep longer and would not wake up, so Monkey went up to him to call, "Master."

The master raised his head but still could make no reply. "What will you say, Master?" Monkey asked.

"Why is my head spinning," Sanzang replied, "why are my eyes swollen, and why an I aching all over from my skin to my bones?"

When Pig heard this he stretched out his hand to feel the master's body. It was feverish. "Now I understand,"

said the idiot with a grin. "He had several bowls too many of last night's free rice and went to sleep head – down. It's indigestion."

"Nonsense," shouted Monkey, "Let me ask the master what's really the matter."

"When I got up in the middle of the night to relieve myself," Sanzang replied, "I did not put my hat on. I think I must have caught a chill in the wind."

Chapter 81

"I'm sure you're right," said Monkey, "Can you travel now?"

"I cannot even sit up," Sanzang replied, "let alone mount the horse. The journey will have to wait."

"What a thing to say, Master," said Monkey, "As the saying goes, 'A teacher for a day is one's father for life.'

As your disciples we are like your sons. There's another saying that A son does not have to shit silver or gold;

As long as be can do what's needed he'll be fine.

If you're not feeling well you shouldn't be worrying about the journey being delayed. There'll be no problem about waiting for a few days." The three brother—disciples all looked after their master. The morning was followed by midday and dusk, and after a good night dawn returned. Time fled, and three days had soon passed.

The morning after that Sanzang tried to sit up, calling, "Wukong, as I have been very ill these last couple of days I have not asked you before: have people been giving food to the lady Bodhisattva we rescued?"

"What are you bothering about her for?" laughed Monkey, "What you should be concerned with is your own illness."

"Yes, yes," said Sanzang. "Help me up and fetch me paper, brush and ink. Borrow an inkstone here in the monastery."

"What do you want them for?" Monkey asked.

"I want to write a letter," Sanzang replied. "I shall seal it up with our passport and ask you to deliver it for me to His Majesty Emperor Taizong in Chang'an."

"Easy," said Monkey, "I may not be much good at anything else, but when it comes to delivering letters I'm the champion of the whole world. So wrap the letter up and give it to me. I'll take it to Chang'an in a single somersault, give it to the Tang Emperor, and come back with another somersault before your brush and inkstone have dried up. But why do you want to write a letter? Tell me what you want to say in the letter— —you can write it down later."

"This is what I will write," said Sanzang, weeping:

"Your subject beats his head three times upon the ground, With a triple shout of 'Long live Your Majesty' as I bow to my lord.

The civil and military officials ate all present,

And four hundred courtiers all listen to what is said.

Chapter 81

1127

Journey to the West

Years ago I left the East on your command,

Hoping to see the Buddha on the Vulture Peak.

But on my journey I have met with obstructions;

And been delayed by unexpected disaster along the way.

My illness is grave; I cannot move one step;

The gate to Buddha is as distant as the gate to heaven.

I will not live to bring back the scriptures;

I submit with respect that a new envoy should be sent."

When Monkey heard this he could not help bursting out into uproarious laughter. "You're hopeless, Master,"

he said, "thinking that sort of thing after just a touch of illness. If you were seriously ill you'd only have to ask me to find out whether you were going to live or die. I have my own special way of dealing with it. I'd ask,

'Which king of the Underworld dared think of this? Which of the judges issued the warrant? Which demon messenger is coming to fetch him?' If they make me angry I'll lose my temper the way I did when I made havoc in Heaven, smash my way into the Underworld with my cudgel, capture the ten kings and rip the sinews out of every one of them. I'll show them no mercy."

"Stop that boasting, disciple," Sanzang replied. "I am very ill."

"Brother," said Pig, going up to him, "it's very awkward to have the master saying he's in a bad way and you insisting he isn't. Let's settle things as quickly as we can, sell the horse, pawn the luggage, buy a coffin to bury the master in and split up."

"You're talking out of turn again, you idiot," Monkey replied. "What you don't realize is that the master used to be our Tathagata Buddha's second disciple. His original name was the Venerable Golden Cicada. This is great hardship he has to endure because he once slighted the Buddha's Dharma."

"But, brother," Pig replied, "even if the master did slight the Buddha's Dharma he was exiled to the East and born into another body amid the sea of right and wrong and the battlefield of tongues. He swore an oath to go to the Western Heaven, worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. Every time he's met an evil spirit he's been tied up; and every time he's come across a monster he's been hung up. He's had to put up with every kind of agony. That should be enough. Why has he had to be ill as well?"

"This is something you wouldn't know about," Monkey replied. "The master once dropped off to sleep instead of listening to the Buddha teaching the Dharma, and as he drowsed he trod on a grain of rice with his left foot.

That is why he has to be ill for three days in the lower world."

"So goodness only knows how many years someone who eats as messily as I do will have to be ill," replied a shocked Pig.

"Brother," Monkey replied, "the Buddha will spare ordinary creatures such as you. There's something else you don't know. As the poet said,

Hoeing millet in the noonday sun;

Sweat drops on the ground beneath the millet.

Who understands that of the food that's in the bowl,

Every single grain was won through bitter toil?

The master will only be ill today. Tomorrow he'll be better."

"I am feeling different today from how I did yesterday," said Sanzang. "My throat is absolutely parched. Go and find some cold water somewhere for me to drink."

"Fine," Monkey replied. "If water's what you want, Master, that means you're better. I'll go and fetch some."

Monkey at once took the begging bowl and went to the kitchen at the back of the monastery, where he came across all the monks red–eyed and sobbing with grief. The only thing was that they dared not cry aloud.

"Don't be so petty, little monks," said Brother Monkey. "Before we leave we'll thank you for the days we've spent here, and we'll pay for our cooking fuel and lighting by the day. You really shouldn't be such pustules."

"We wouldn't dare accept it," the lamas said at once, falling to their knees, "we wouldn't dare."

"What do you mean, you wouldn't dare?" said Monkey. "It must be that long–snouted monk of ours who has an enormous appetite. He'd eat you out of house and home."

"My lord," the lamas replied, "there are over a hundred senior and junior lamas in this monastery. If each of us kept you for a single day we could afford to support you for over a hundred days. We're not the sort of skinflints who'd calculate what you will cost us in food."

"If you're not working out the cost then why are you sobbing?" Monkey asked.

"Lord," the lamas replied, "there's an evil monster in the monastery. We don't know which mountain it's from.

Last night we sent two junior lamas to strike the bell and beat the drum. We heard the sound of the bell and the drum but the lamas never came back. When we looked for them the next day all we found were their monk's hats and shoes lying in the courtyard at the back and their skeletons. They had been eaten. In the three days you have been here six lamas have disappeared from the monastery. That's why we can't help being frightened and grieved. When we realized that your venerable master was ill we couldn't stop these tears stealing out even though we kept the news to ourselves."

"Say no more," said Brother Monkey, who was both shocked and delighted by what he heard. "It must be an evil monster who's killing people here. I'll wipe it out for you."

"My lord," the lamas replied, "any evil spirit worthy of the name has

magical powers. It's bound to be able to ride clouds, come out of the underworld and disappear again. As the ancients put it so well, 'Trust not the straightest of the straight; beware of the inhuman human.' Please don't take offence, my lord, when we say that if you can rid our monastery of this scourge that would be a great happiness for us. But if you can't catch it Chapter 81

things will be pretty difficult."

"What do you mean by things being pretty difficult?" Monkey asked.

"We will be honest with you, my lord," the lamas replied. "Although there are only a hundred or so of us lamas in this monastery we all became monks as children:

When our hair grows we have it shaved off;

Our clothes are patched with rags.

We rise in the morning to wash our faces,

Then bow with hands together

In submission to the Great Way.

At night we tidy up, burn incense,

And piously pray,

Chanting the name of Amitabha.

When we look up we see the Buddha

On his ninefold lotus throne

Well–versed in the Three Vehicles,

Riding in his mercy on clouds of dharma,

And we long to see the Sakyamuni in the Jeta park.

Looking down we see into our hearts,

Accept the Five Prohibitions,

Pass through a thousand aeons,

And live each life amid the countless dharmas,

Hoping to understand emptiness and the impermanence of matter.

When the benefactors come,

Old, young, tall, short, fat, thin,

We each beat wooden fish,

Chapter 81

1130

Journey to the West

Strike bronze chimes,

Slowly and deliberately,

With the two rolls of the Lotus Sutra

And the short *Litany of the Emperor of Liang*.

When the benefactors do not come,

New, old, strange, familiar, rustic, smart,

We put our hands together,

Eyes shut,

Silent,

Entering meditation on the rush mats,

Firmly closing the gates under the moon.

Let the orioles sing and other birds chirp in idle strife:

They cannot mount our expeditions and compassionate chariot of dharma.

This is why we cannot subdue tigers and dragons,

Or recognize monsters and spirits.

If, my lord, you provoked the evil monster,

To which we hundred and more lamas would be but a single meal, All of us living creatures would fall to the wheel of rebirth, This ancient monastery of meditation would be destroyed,

And finally there would be no light at the Tathagata's assembly.

This would cause great troubles."

When Brother Monkey heard the lamas say this anger surged up from his heart and hatred from his gall.

"What a stupid lot you lamas are!" he shouted at the top of his voice. "Are you only aware of those evil spirits? Do you know nothing of what I've done?"

"Really we don't," the lamas replied in very quiet voices.

"Then I'll tell you briefly about it," Monkey said.

Chapter 81

1131

Journey to the West

"I used to subdue tigers and dragons on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit; I once went up to Heaven and made great havoc in its palace.

When I was hungry I nibbled just two or three

Of Lord Lao Zi's elixir tablets;

When I was thirsty I sipped six or seven cups

Of the Jade Emperor's own wine.

When I glare with my golden eyes that are neither black nor white, The sky turns deathly pale

While the moon is hidden in cloud.

When I wield my gold–banded cudgel that's the right length,

It strikes unseen

And leaves no trace behind.

What do I care about big or little monsters,

However rough or vicious they may be?

Once I go for them

They may run away, nimble about, hide or panic.

Whenever I grab one

They'll be filed down, cooked, ground to bits or pulverized in a mortar.

I'm like one of the eight immortals crossing the sea,

Each of whom gives a unique display of his magical powers.

Lamas, I'll catch that evil spirit and show it to you:

Then you'll know what sort of person this Monkey is."

When the lamas heard this they nodded and said quietly, "From the way this damned baldy is shooting his mouth off and talking big there must be something behind it all."

Chapter 81

1132

Journey to the West

They all made polite noises of respectful assent except for the older lama who said, "Wait. Your master is ill, and catching the evil spirit is not as important as that. As the saying goes, When a young gentleman goes to a feast

He either gets drunk or eats till he's filled.

When a strong warrior goes into battle

He either is wounded or gets himself killed.

If you two fight it out here you may well get your master into trouble too. It's not a sound idea."

"You're right," said Monkey, "you're right. I'll take my master a drink of cold water and be right back."

Picking up the begging bowl he filled it with cold water, went out of the monastery kitchen and back to the abbot's lodgings and called, "Master, cold water for you." Sanzang, who was just then suffering torments of thirst, raised his head, held the bowl with both hands, and took only one sip of the water. It really was a case of

A drop when you're thirsty is just like sweet dew;

Get the right medicine and you'll feel good as new.

Seeing the venerable elder gradually recovering his spirits and looking less worried Monkey asked, "Could you manage some soup and other food, Master?"

"That cold water was a magical cure," Sanzang replied. "I have already half recovered from my illness. I would like some food if there is any."

"The master's better," Monkey shouted repeatedly at the top of his voice. "He wants some soup and other food." He told the lamas to arrange some at once. They washed and boiled rice, made noodles, cooked pancakes, steamed breadrolls, and prepared vermicelli soup. Four or five tables of food were carried in, but the Tang Priest ate only half a bowl of rice gruel, while Monkey and Friar Sand managed only a tableful between them. Pig gobbled up the rest. The dishes were then taken out, the lamp was lit, and the lamas dispersed.

"How long have we been here now?" Sanzang asked.

"Three whole days," Monkey replied. "By tomorrow evening it will be four days."

"We could have covered a lot of distance in three days," Sanzang replied.

"Never mind about the distance, Master," said Monkey. "We'll be on our way tomorrow."

Chapter 81

1133

Journey to the West

"Yes," said Sanzang, "even if I am still a little poorly there is nothing that can be done."

"If we're setting out tomorrow let me catch the evil spirit tonight," said

Monkey.

"What evil spirit?" Sanzang asked in astonishment. "There's an evil spirit in this monastery that I'm going to catch for them," Monkey replied.

"But how can you be having ideas like that before I have even recovered from my illness?" Sanzang asked. "If that monster has magical powers and you fail to catch it, then it will kill me, won't it?"

"You're always running people down," Monkey replied. "Wherever we go I subdue evil creatures. Have you ever seen me come off second best? That could only happen if I did nothing. If I act I'm bound to win."

"Disciple," said Sanzang, clutching him, "the saying is quite right that goes: Do people a good turn whenever you can;

If it is possible treat them with mercy.

Worrying cannot compare with true kindness;

Better be patient than strive for supremacy."

In the face of his master's impassioned pleas and refusal to allow him to subdue the monster, Monkey could only speak frankly.

"I'll be honest with you, Master," he said. "The evil spirit has been eating people here."

"Who has it eaten?" Sanzang asked with shock.

"In the three days we've been here it's eaten six of this monastery's young lamas," Monkey said, to which Sanzang replied:

"Foxes will grieve at the death of the hare;

Creatures will all for their own kind show care.

As it has eaten monks from this monastery and I am a monk too I will let you go, but do be careful."

"No need to tell me," said Monkey, "I'll wipe it out the moment I get my hands on it."

Watch him as he tells Pig and Friar Sand in the lamplight to guard the master. When he leapt happily out of the abbot's lodgings and went

sky the moon had not yet risen and it was dark inside the hall. He breathed out some of his magic fire to light the glazed lamp then beat the drum that stood to the East and struck the bell to the West. That done, he shook himself and turned himself into a young lama of only eleven or twelve who was wearing a yellow silk shirt and a white cotton tunic, striking a wooden fish with his hand as he recited a sutra. He waited till the first watch without seeing anything happen. The waning moon rose only in the second watch. Then a roaring wind could be heard. It was a splendid wind:

Black mists cast the sky into darkness;

Gloomy clouds cover the earth with murk.

Inky black in every quarter,

All enveloped in indigo.

At first the wind raises dust and dirt;

Then it blows down trees and ravages woods.

Amid the dust and dirt the stars still shine;

When trees go down and woods are ravaged the moonlight is obscured.

It blows so hard the Moon Goddess holds tight to the sala tree And the Jade Hare hunts all around for the medicine dish.

The Nine Bright Shiner star lords shut their gates;

The dragon kings of the four seas close their doors.

The city god in his temple looks for the little devils;

Immortals in the sky cannot ride their clouds.

The kings of the Underworld search for their horse—faced demons While the panicking judges get their turbans in a tangle.

The wind blows so hard it moves Mount Kunlun's rocks,

And churns up the waves on rivers and lakes.

As soon as the wind had passed by there was a fragrance of musk and incense and the tinkling of pendants.

When Monkey looked up he saw that a woman of great beauty was going towards the Buddha Hall. Monkey mumbled the words of a sutra for all he was worth. The woman went up to him, put her arms around him and asked, "What's that sutra you're reciting?"

Chapter 81

1135

Journey to the West

"One I vowed to," said Monkey.

"But why are you still reciting it when the others are all asleep?" she insisted.

"I vowed to, so why shouldn't I?" Monkey replied.

Keeping a tight hold on him, the woman kissed his lips and said, "Let's go round the back for a bit of fun."

Monkey deliberately turned his head aside as he replied, "Stop being so naughty."

"Do you know how to tell people's fortunes from their faces?" the woman asked.

"I know a bit about it," Monkey replied.

"What can you tell about me?" she continued. "You look to me rather like someone who's been driven out by her parents – in – law for carrying on with strangers."

"You're wrong," she replied, "you're wrong.

I have not been driven out by my parents – in – law,

Nor have I carried on with strangers.

Because of my ill fate in an earlier life

I was married to a husband who is much too young

And can't do his staff in the candlelit bedroom:

That is the reason why I have left my husband.

As the stars and moon are so bright tonight and we are fated to come hundreds of miles to meet each other, let's go round to the garden at the back to make love."

When Brother Monkey heard this he nodded to himself and thought, "So those stupid lamas all died because they were led astray by lust. Now she's trying to lure me. Lady," he said in reply, "I'm a monk and still very young. I don't know anything about love – making."

"Come with me and I'll teach you," the woman replied.

"All right then," Monkey thought with an inward smile, "I'll go with her and see how she fixes things."

Shoulder nestling against shoulder and hand in hand the two of them left the Buddha Hall and went straight to the garden at the back. Here the monster tripped Monkey over and sent him to the ground. With wild calls of

"My darling!" she made a grab for his crotch.

"So you really want to eat me up, my girl," he said, seizing her hand and throwing her off balance so that she somersaulted to the ground.

Chapter 81

1136

Journey to the West

"So you can throw your sweetie to the ground, can you, my darling?" she said.

"If I don't take this chance to finish her off what am I waiting for?" he thought. "As they say, hit first and win, strike second and lose." He leaned forward with his hands on his hips, sprang to his feet and reverted to his own form. With a swing of his gold–banded iron cudgel he struck at the monster's head.

In her astonishment she thought, "What a terror this young monk is." When she opened her eyes wide for a better look she realized that he was the Tang Priest's disciple Monkey, but she was not afraid of him. What sort of evil spirit was she, you may wonder.

A golden nose,

Snowy white fur.

She makes her home in a tunnel,

Where she is thoroughly safe.

Three hundred years ago, after training her vital forces,

She paid several visits to the Vulture Peak,

Carrying a full load of flowers and wax candles.

Tathagata sent her down from Heaven.

She was a beloved daughter to the Pagoda–carrying Heavenly King; Prince Nezha treated her as his own sister.

She was no bird that fills up the sea,

Nor was she a tortoise carrying mountains on its back.

She did not fear Lei Huan's swords

Nor was she afraid of Lu Qian's blade.

She came and went

Flowing like the mighty Han and Yangtse;

Moved up and down,

Even up a peak as high as Mounts Taishan and Heng.

Seeing the charming beauty of her face

You would never know she was a mouse – spirit with great powers.

Chapter 81

1137

Journey to the West

In the pride in her enormous magic powers she held up a pair of swords that rang out as she parried to left and right, moving East and West. Although Monkey was rather stronger he could not overpower her. Then magic winds arose on all sides, dimming the waning moon. It was fine battle they fought in the garden at the back: Evil winds blew from the ground;

Dim was the light of the waning moon.

Deserted was the hall of the Brahma Kings,

And the devils' cloister could not be clearly seen.

The back garden saw a battle Between the warrior Sun,

A sage in Heaven, And the furry girl,

A queen among women,

Both competing in magical powers and refusing to submit.

One turned her heart in anger from the dark – skinned baldy;

The other glared with his all – seeing eyes at the finely dressed woman.

With swords in her hands,

She is no female Bodhisattva.

The blows of the cudgel

Were as fierce as a living vajrapani's.

The resounding golden band flashed like lightning;

For an instant the iron shone white as a star.

In fine buildings they grabbed at the precious jade;

In golden halls the mandarin duck figurines were smashed.

As the apes howled the moon seemed small;

Vast was the sky as wild geese called.

The eighteen arhats

Applauded in secret;

Each of the thirty－two devas

Was struck with panic.

The Great Sage Monkey was in such high spirits that his cudgel never missed. Realizing that she was no match for him, the evil spirit frowned suddenly and thought of a plan as she extricated herself and made off.

"Where do you think you're going, you baggage?" Monkey shouted. "Surrender at once."

The evil spirit paid no attention and fled. When she was hard－pressed by Monkey's pursuit she took the embroidered shoe off her left foot, blew on it with a magic breath, said the words of a spell, called out,

"Change!" and turned it into a likeness of herself that came back at him waving a pair of swords. Meanwhile she turned her real body

with a shake into a pure breeze and went.

This was Sanzang's star of disaster. She headed straight for the abbot's quarters, lifted Sanzang up into a cloud, and, on the instant, before anyone could see anything, she was back at Mount Pitfall and inside the Bottomless Cave, where she told her underlings to prepare a vegetarian marriage feast.

The story switches back to Brother Monkey, who fought with desperate anxiety until he was able to seize an opening and smash the evil spirit to the ground with a single blow, only to find that she was in fact an embroidered shoe. Realizing that he had fallen for a trick he went straight back to see the master. But was the master there? There were only the idiot and Friar Sand muttering together. His chest bursting with fury, Monkey put all thought of what he ought to do out of his head and raised his cudgel to lay about him.

"I'll kill the pair of you," he shouted, "I'll kill the pair of you."

The idiot was desperate, but there was no way for him to escape. Friar Sand, however, as a general from the magic mountain who had seen a great deal, adopted a very mild and conciliatory approach when he stepped forward, knelt down and said, "Elder brother, I understand. I'm sure that after you've killed us two you intend to go straight back home instead of rescuing the master."

"When I've killed you two I'm going to rescue him myself," Monkey retorted.

"How can you say that?" replied Friar Sand with a smile. "Without us two it would be a case of You can't spin a thread from only one strand

Or clap with the palm of a single hand.

Who'd look after the luggage or the horse for you? We'd do much better to forget our differences and fight side by side like Guan Zhong and Bao Shuya than to have a battle of wits like Sun Bin and Pang Juan. As the old saying goes,

To kill a tiger you need your brothers' help;

Have fathers and sons fight together in battle.

I hope you will spare us, brother, so that tomorrow morning we can all work together with a single mind in our search for the master." Although his magical powers were tremendous Monkey knew what was right and needed at the time, so that Friar Sand's entreaties made him change his mind.

"Get up, Pig and Friar Sand," he said. "But when we hunt for the master tomorrow you'll have to make a real effort." The idiot was so grateful at being let off that he would gladly have promised Monkey half the sky.

"Brother," Friar Sand said, "leave it all to me." The three brother disciples were so anxious that none of them could sleep. They wished they could make the sun rise in the East with a nod of the head and blow all the stars out of the sky with a single breath.

After sitting there till dawn the three of them packed up and were about to get out, only to find the gateway barred by one of the lamas, who asked, "Where are you going, gentlemen?"

"This is most embarrassing," Monkey replied with a smile. "Yesterday I boasted to all the monks that I'd capture the evil spirit for them. So far from me capturing her she's made my master disappear. We're off to look for him."

"My lord," said the lamas with horror, "our trivial problem has got your master involved. Where will you look for him?"

"I know where I'll look," Monkey replied.

"Even though you're going please don't be in such a hurry," said the lamas. "Have some breakfast first." Two or three bowls of hot gruel were brought in that Pig cleaned up with great gusto.

"What fine monks," he said. "When we've found the master we'll come back here to see you again."

"What you mean is come back to eat their food," said Monkey. "Go and see if the girl is still in the devarajas'

hall."

"She's gone, my lord," the lamas said, "she's gone. She has spent only one night there and is gone the next morning." Monkey cheerfully

took his leave of the lamas and made Pig and Friar Sand lead the horse and carry the luggage as they headed back East.

"Brother," said Pig, "you're wrong. Why are we going East?"

"You wouldn't know," said Monkey. "That girl who was tied up in the Black Pine Forest the other day— —I saw through her with my fiery eyes and golden pupils, but you all thought she was a good person. And now it's her who's eaten the monks and her who's carried the master off. You all did a fine thing rescuing that 'lady Bodhisattva'. As she's carried the master off we're going back the way we came to look for her."

"Good, good," sighed the other two with admiration. "You're much cleverer than you look. Let's go."

Chapter 81

1140

Journey to the West

The three of them hurried back into the forest, where this was what could be seen: Piles of cloud,

Heavy mists,

Many a layer of rock,

A twisting path.

The tracks of foxes and hares cross each other;

Tiger, leopard, jackal and wolf move in and out of the undergrowth.

With no sign of a monster to be seen in the wood

They do not know where Sanzang might be found.

In his anxiety Monkey pulled out his cudgel, shook himself and made himself look as he had when he made great havoc in Heaven, with three heads, six arms and six hands wielding three cudgels. With these he lashed out furiously and noisily among the trees.

"Friar Sand," said Pig when he saw this, "not finding the master has made him go off his head." In fact Monkey had beat a way through the trees and flushed out two old men— —the mountain god and the local

deity – –who went up to him, knelt down and said, "Great Sage, the god of this mountain and the local deity pay their respects."

"That rod certainly gets results," said Pig. "He clears a path with it and flushes out the mountain god and the local deity. If he cleared another path he'd even flush out an evil star."

"Mountain god, local deity," said Monkey, "you're a disgrace. You're hand in glove with the bandits here.

When they make a good haul they buy pigs and sheep to sacrifice to you. On top of that you're accomplices of the evil spirit. You helped her kidnap my master and bring him here. Where's he being hidden? If you want to be spared a beating tell me the truth right now."

"Great Sage," the two gods said with alarm, "you are misjudging us. The evil spirit doesn't live on our mountain or come within our jurisdiction. But when the wind blows at night we have heard a thing or two about her."

"Tell me everything you know," said Monkey.

"The evil spirit carried your master off to a place over three hundred miles due South of here," the local deity replied. "There's a mountain there called Mount Pitfall with a cave in it called the Bottomless Cave. He was taken there by a disguised evil spirit from that cave." This news gave Monkey a shock that he did not reveal.

Shouting at the mountain god and the local deity to dismiss them he put his magical appearance away, turned back into himself and said to Pig and Friar Sand, "The master's a long way from here."

Chapter 81

"If it's a long way let's go there by cloud," Pig replied.

The splendid idiot went ahead on a wild wind followed by Friar Sand on a cloud. As the white horse had originally been a dragon's son he too came by wind and mist as he carried the luggage on his back. The Great Sage set off by somersault as he headed due South, and before long a high mountain came into view that was blocking the way for the clouds.

The three of them took hold of the horse and stopped their clouds.
This is what the mountain looked like: The summit touched the azure sky,

Its peaks joined with the blue of the heavens.

Trees by the million grew on every side,

While flying birds sung noisily all around.

Tigers and leopards moved in packs,

Water deer and roebuck walked through the bushes.

On the Southern slopes rare flowers bloomed fragrant;

On the Northern side the snow never melted.

Steep and craggy were its ridges,

Sheer were its overhangs and rockfaces.

Pinnacles shot straight up

And deep ravines curved all around.

It was dark green among the pines,

And the rocks were jagged.

It struck fear into the traveler's heart.

No sign could be seen of woodcutters,

And the immortal boys picking herbs had vanished.

The tigers and leopards here could make mists,

And all the foxes set winds roaring.

Chapter 81

1142

Journey to the West

"Brother," said Pig, "this mountain's so high and sheer there must be evil on it."

"Goes without saying," Monkey replied. "High mountains all have monsters; there's never a steep ridge without spirits. Friar Sand," he called, "you and I are going to stay here while we send Pig into the mountain hollows to look around and find out the best way for us to take. If there really is a cave palace he must discover where the entrance is. Find everything out so that we can go in together to find the master and rescue him."

"Just my lousy luck," said Pig, "having to go first and take the brunt."

"Last night you said we could leave it all to you," Monkey replied, "so why are you trying to get out of it now?"

"Stop shouting at me," Pig said. "I'm going." The idiot put down his rake, tugged at his clothes and leapt empty – handed down from the mountain to find the path.

If you don't know whether this departure was to be for good or ill listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 82

The Girl Seeks the Male

The Primal Deity Guards the Way

The story tells how Pig leapt down the mountainside and found a narrow path. After following it for nearly two miles he came across two she – monsters drawing water from a well. How did he know that they both were monsters? Each of them had on her head an extremely unfashionable hair – style held up by bamboo slivers that stood one foot two or three inches high.

"Evil monsters," Pig called, going up to them.

The two of them looked at each other and said. "What an outrageous monk. We don't know him and we've never had words with him. So why did he call us evil monsters?" In their fury the monsters raised the pole with which they were going to carry the water and struck at Pig's head.

After a few blows that he could not ward off as he was unarmed, the idiot rushed back up the mountain with his head covered by both hands shouting, "Brother! Go back! The monsters are vicious."

"What's so vicious about them?" Monkey asked.

"There were two evil spirits drawing water from the well in the hollow," said Pig, "and they hit me three or four times with their carrying – pole just because I spoke to them."

"What did you call them?" Monkey asked.

"Evil monsters," Pig replied.

"You got off lightly then," laughed Monkey.

Chapter 82

1143

Journey to the West

"I'm most obliged for your concern," replied Pig. "My head has swollen up where they hit it, and you tell me I've got off lightly."

"Soft words will get you anywhere on earth; act rough and you won't move a single step," replied Monkey.

"As they're local fiends from round here and we're monks from far away you'd have had to be a bit polite even if you'd had fists growing all over your body. Do you think they should have hit me instead of you? You were the one who called them evil monsters. Courtesy first!"

"I never realized," said Pig.

"Living on human flesh in the mountains since childhood as you have," said Monkey, "can you recognize two kinds of tree?"

"I don't know," Pig said. "Which two trees?"

"The willow and the sandalwood," Monkey replied. "The willow has a very soft nature, so that craftsmen can carve it into holy images or make statues of the Tathagata out of it. It's gilded, painted, set with jewels, decorated with flowers, and many worshippers burn incense to it. It receives unbounded blessings. But the sandalwood is so hard that it's used as the pressing – beam in the oil – press with iron hoops round its head, and it's hit with iron hammers too. The only reason it suffers like this is because it's to hard."

"You should have told me all this before," said Pig, "then I wouldn't have been beaten."

"Now go back and find out the truth," said Brother Monkey.

"But if I go there again they'll recognize me," Pig replied.

"Then turn into something else," said Monkey.

"But even if I do turn into something else, brother, how am I to question them?" asked Pig.

"When you look different go up to them and bow to them," Monkey replied. "See how old they are. If they're about the same age as us call them 'Miss,' and if they're a lot older call them 'Lady.'"

"What a terrible climb – down: why should we be treating them as our relations when they're strangers from this far away?" said Pig.

"That's not treating them as relations," replied Monkey. "Its just a way of getting the truth out of them. If they're the ones who've got our master we'll be able to act; and if it isn't them we won't lose any time before going to fight elsewhere."

"You're right," said Pig. "I'm going back."

The splendid idiot tucked his rake in his belt, went down into the hollow, shook himself and turned into a far, dark – skinned monk. He swaggered as he went up to the monsters, chanted a loud "na – a – aw" of respect and said, "Respectful greetings, ladies."

"This monk's much better," the two monsters said with delight. "He expresses his respects and knows how to address us properly." Then they asked him, "Where are you from, venerable elder?"

"From somewhere," Pig replied.

Chapter 82

"And where are you going?" they asked.

"Somewhere," Pig replied.

"What's your name?" they asked.

"What it is," Pig replied again.

"Better he may be," the monsters said with a laugh, "but he won't tell

us about himself. He just echoes our questions."

"Ladies," Pig asked, "why are you fetching water?"

"You wouldn't know, monk," the demons replied with smiles. "Our lady brought a Tang Priest back to the cave last night and she wants to look after him well. As the water in our cave is none too clean she's sent us two to fetch some of this good water produced by the mating of the Yin and the Yang. She's laid on a vegetarian banquet as well for the Tang Priest; she's going to marry him this evening."

As soon as he heard this the idiot rushed straight back up the mountain shouting. "Friar Sand, bring the luggage here at once. We're dividing it up."

"Why, brother?" Friar Sand asked.

"When we've divided it up you can go back to man–eating in the Flowing Sands River," Pig replied, "I'll return to Gao Village to see my wife, Big Brother can play the sage on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, and the white dragon can be a dragon in the ocean again. The master's getting married in this evil spirits cave.

Let's all go and settle down."

"You're talking nonsense again, you idiot," replied Brother Monkey.

"I bloody well am not," Pig retorted. "Those two evil spirits who were carrying water said a moment ago that a vegetarian wedding feast is being laid on for the master."

"How can you say things like that when the evil spirits are holding the master prisoner in the cave and he's longing for us to go in and rescue him?" said Monkey.

"How can we rescue him?" Pig asked.

"You two bring the horse and the luggage, while we go with the two she–monsters as our guides," Monkey replied. "When we reach the entrance we can act together."

The idiot could only go with Monkey as he followed the two monsters for five or six miles deep into the mountains before suddenly disappearing. "So the master was captured by a devil in broad daylight,"

exclaimed Pig with surprise.

"You've got good eyesight," said Monkey. "How can you possibly tell what they really were?"

"Those two monsters were carrying the water along when suddenly they disappeared. They must be daytime devils."

"I think they went into a cave," said Monkey. "Wait while I go to have a look."

Chapter 82

1145

Journey to the West

The splendid Great Sage opened his fiery eyes with their golden pupils and scanned the whole mountain. He saw no movement, but did spot a ceremonial archway most intricately made with many flowers and colours, triple eaves and fourfold decorations in front of the cliff. Going closer with Pig and Friar Sand he saw four large words written on it:

PITFALL MOUNTAIN: BOTTOMLESS CAVE

"Brothers," said Monkey, "here's the evil spirits' archway, but I still don't know where the entrance is."

"Can't be far," said Friar Sand, "can't be far. Let's have a good look for it." When they turned round to look they saw a great rock over three miles around at the foot of the mountain beneath the archway. In the middle of it was a hole the size of a water–vat, which had become very slippery by repeated climbing.

"Brother," said Pig, "that's where the evil spirits go in and out of their cave."

"That's very strange," said Monkey. "To be frank with the two of you, I've captured quite a few evil spirits since I started escorting the Tang Priest, but I've never seen a cave palace like this one before. Pig, you go down first and find out how deep it is. Then I'll be able to go in and rescue the master."

"It'll be hard," said Pig with a shake of his head, "very hard. I'm very clumsy. If I tripped and fell in it might take me two or three years to

reach the bottom."

"How deep is it then?" Monkey asked.

"Look," Pig replied, and as the Great Sage leant over the edge of the hole to take a careful look he saw to his astonishment that it was very deep indeed and must have measured over a hundred miles around.

"It's very, very deep, brother," he turned round to say.

"Go back then," Pig replied. "The master's beyond saving."

"What a thing to say!" Monkey retorted. "'Have no thoughts of being lazy; put idleness out of your mind.' Put the luggage down, and tether the horse to one of the legs of the archway. You and Friar Sand must block the entrance with your rake and staff while I go inside to explore. If the master really is inside I'll drive the evil spirits out with my iron cudgel, and when they reach the entrance you mustn't let them out. We'll only be able to kill the evil spirits and rescue the master if we work together." The other two accepted their orders.

Monkey sprang into the hole, and under his feet tea thousand coloured clouds appeared, while a thousand layers of auspicious mist shielded him. He was soon at the bottom, which was a very long way down. Inside all was bright; there was the same sunshine, winds, flowers, fruit and trees as in the world above.

"What a splendid place," Monkey thought. "It reminds me of the Water Curtain Cave that Heaven gave me in the place where I was born. This is another cave paradise." As he looked around he saw a gate–tower with double eaves around which grew many clumps of pine and bamboo. Inside were many buildings.

"This must be where the evil spirit lives," he thought. "I'll go in and find out what's up. No, wait. If I go in like this she'll recognize me. I'd better transform myself." With a shake and a hand–spell he turned himself into a Chapter 82

fly and flew lightly up to land on the gate–tower and listen in. From here he saw the monster sitting at her ease in a thatched pavilion. She was dressed far more beautifully than she had been when they rescued her in the pine forest or when she had tried to catch Monkey in the

monastery: Her hair was piled in a crow – black coiffure;

She wore a green velvet waistcoat.

Her feet were a pair of curving golden lotuses;

Her fingers were as delicate as bamboo shoots in spring.

Her powdered face was like a silver dish,

And her red lips were as glossy as a cherry.

She was a regular beauty,

Even more lovely than the lady on the moon.

After capturing the pilgrim monk that morning

She was going to know the pleasure of sharing his bed.

Monkey said nothing as he listened out for what she might say. Before long the cherry of her lips parted as she said with great pleasure, "Lay on a vegetarian feast, my little ones, and quick. My darling Tang Priest and I are going to be man and wife afterwards."

"So it's true," thought Brother Monkey, grinning to himself. "I thought Pig was just joking. I'd better fly in and find the master. I wonder what state of mind he's in. If he's been led astray I'm leaving him here." When he spread his wings and flew inside to look he saw the Tang Priest sitting in a corridor behind a trellis covered with opaque red paper below and left clear above.

Butting a hole through the trellis paper Monkey landed on the Tang Priest's bald head and called, "Master."

"Save me, disciple," replied Sanzang, who recognized Monkey's voice.

"You're useless, Master," said Monkey. "The evil spirit is laying on a feast, and when you've eaten it you two are getting married. I expect you'll have a son or a daughter to start another generation of monks and nuns.

What have you got to be so upset about?"

When the venerable elder heard this he gnashed his teeth and said, "Disciple, in all the time since I left Chang'an, accepted you as my follower at the Double Boundary Mountain and started my journey

West, when have I ever eaten meat or had any wicked ideas? Now the evil spirit has captured me she is insisting that I mate with her. If I lose my true masculine essence may I fall from the wheel of reincarnation and be fixed for ever behind the Dark Mountains, never to rise again."

Chapter 82

1147

Journey to the West

"No need to swear any oaths," said Monkey with a grin. "If you really want to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven I'll take you there."

"I can't remember the way I came in," Sanzang replied.

"Never mind about forgetting," said Monkey. "You won't get out of here as easily as you came in, which was from the top downwards. If I save you now you'll have to go from the bottom upwards. If you're very lucky you'll squeeze out through the entrance and get away. But if your luck's out you won't be able to squeeze through and sooner or later you'll die of suffocation."

"This is terrible," said Sanzang, the tears pouring from his eyes. "What are we to do?"

"No problem," said Monkey, "no problem. The evil spirit's getting some wine prepared for you. You'll have to drink a goblet of it whether you want to or not. But you must pour it out quickly so that it makes a lot of froth.

Then I can turn myself into a tiny insect and fly under the bubbles. When she gulps me down into her belly I'll tear her heart and liver to shreds and rip her guts apart. Once I've killed her you'll be able to escape."

"But that would be an inhuman thing to do, disciple," said Sanzang.

"If all you're interested in is being kind you're done for," Monkey replied. "The evil spirit's a murderess. What do you care so much about her for?"

"Oh well," said Sanzang, "never mind. But you will have to stay with me." Indeed: The Great Sage Sun guarded Tang Sanzang well;

The pilgrim priest depended on the Handsome Monkey King.

Master and disciple had not even finished their discussion when the evil spirit, who had arranged everything, came in along the corridor, unlocked the doors and called, "Reverend sir." The Tang Priest dared not reply.

She addressed him again, and again he dared not reply. Why was that? He was thinking that Divine energy is dispersed by an open mouth;

Trouble starts when the tongue begins to move.

He was thinking with all his heart that if he obstinately refused to open his mouth she might turn vicious and murder him in an instant. Just when he was feeling confused, wondering which difficult alternative to choose and asking himself what to do, the evil spirit addressed him as "Reverend sir" for the third time.

The Tang Priest had no choice but to answer, "Here I am, madam." For him to give this reply was to make all the flesh fall off him. Now everybody says that the Tang Priest is a sincere monk, so how could he reply to the she–devil when he was on his way to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven?

Chapter 82

1148

Journey to the West

What you would not realize is that this was a crisis in which his very survival was at stake, that he had absolutely no alternative; and although he went through the form of replying he was free of desire inside. But when the evil spirit heard his reply she pushed the door open, helped the Tang Priest to his feet, held his hand, stood with her side pressed against his and whispered in his ear. Just look at her as she lays on the charm and makes herself alluring in every possible way. She did not realize that Sanzang was full of revulsion.

"From the way she's making herself so seductive," Monkey thought with a wry grin to himself, "I'm worried that she might get the master interested." Indeed:

The monk in demon trouble met a pretty girl;

The she – devil's beauty was truly superb.

Her slender jade eyebrows were like two willow leaves;

Her round face was set off with peach blossom.

Embroidered shoes gave a sight of a pair of phoenixes;

Her crow – black hair was piled high at the temples.

As smiling she led the master by his hand

His cassock was tinged with orchid and musk.

Her arms around him, the she – devil took the master to a thatched pavilion and said, "Reverend sir, I've had a drink brought here to have with you."

"Lady," said the Tang Priest, "as a monk I can take no impure food."

"I know," the evil spirit replied. "As the water in the cave isn't clean I've sent for some of the pure water from the mating of the Yin and the Yang up on the mountain, and had a banquet of fruit and vegetables prepared.

After that you and I are going to have some fun." When the Tang Priest went into the pavilion with her this is what could be seen:

All within the gates

Was decked in silks and embroideries;

Throughout the hall

Incense rose from golden lion censers.

Black – painted inlaid tables were set in rows,

On which stood dark – lacquered bamboo dishes.

On the inlaid tables

Were all kinds of delicacies;

In the bamboo dishes

Were vegetarian delights:

Crab apples, olives, lotus seeds, grapes, torreya—nuts,

hazelnuts, pine—nuts, lichees, longans, chestnuts, water caltrops, jujubes, persimmons, walnuts, gingko nuts, kumquats and oranges.

There was the fruit that grows on every hill,

The fresh vegetables of each season;

Beancurd, wheat gluten, tree—ear fungus, fresh bamboo shoots, button mushrooms, gill fungus, yams, sealwort, agar, day lily fried in vegetable oil,

Hyacinth beans, cowpeas prepared with mature sauces.

Cucumbers, gourds, gingko, turnip greens.

Peeled aubergines were cooked like quails;

Seeded wax gourds

Taro stewed tender and sprinkled with sugar,

Turnips boiled in vinegar.

Pungent chili and ginger made it all delicious;

All the dishes were a balance of bland and salty.

Revealing the tips of her jade fingers she raised a dazzling golden goblet that she filled with fine wine.

"Dearest reverend gentleman," she said, handing it to him, "my darling, have a drink to celebrate our happy union." Sanzang was covered with embarrassment as he took the wine.

He poured a libation into the air as he prayed silently, "Devas who guard the Dharma, Guardians of the Four Quarters and the Centre, Four Duty Gods: your disciple Chen Xuanzang has benefited from the secret protection of all you deities sent by the Bodhisattva Guanyin on my journey to pay my respects at the Thunder Monastery, see the

Buddha and seek the scriptures. I have now been captured by an evil spirit on my way. She is forcing me to marry her and has now handed me this cup of wine to drink. If this really is pure wine I can force myself to drink it and still be able to succeed and see the Buddha. But if it is impure wine I will be breaking my vows and fall for ever into the bitterness of the wheel of rebirth."

Chapter 82

1150

Journey to the West

The Great Sage Sun made himself tiny and was like a secret informant behind his master's ear. When he spoke Sanzang was the only one who could hear him. Knowing that his master was normally fond of the pure wine of grapes he told him to drain the goblet. Sanzang had no choice but to do so, quickly refill the goblet and hand it back to the evil spirit. As he filled it bubbles of happiness formed on the surface of the wine. Brother Monkey turned himself into the tiniest of insects and flew lightly under the bubbles. But when the spirit took the goblet she put it down instead of drinking from it, bowed twice to the Tang Priest and spoke loving words to him with charming bashfulness. By the time she lifted the cup the bubbles had burst and the insect was revealed. Not realizing that it was Monkey transformed the evil spirit took it for a real insect, lifted it out with her little finger and flicked it away.

Seeing that as things were not going as he intended he would be unable to get into her belly Monkey turned himself into a hungry eagle.

Indeed:

Jade claws, gold eyes and iron wings;

In terrible might he rose above the clouds.

Cunning hares and foxes felt faint at just the sight,

And hid among mountains and rivers for hundred of miles around.

When hungry it chased small birds into the wind,

And rose to the gate of heaven when replete.

Murderous were its talons of steel;

In times of triumph it stayed aloof in the clouds.

Monkey flew up, swung his jade claws, and noisily overturned the tables, smashing all the fruit, vegetables and crockery, and leaving the Tang Priest alone there as he flew off. This was so terrifying that the she–devil's heart and gall were split open, and the Tang Priest's flesh and bones were turned crisp. Shivering and shaking, the evil spirit threw her arms round the Tang Priest and said, "Dearest reverend gentleman, wherever did that come from?"

"I don't know," Sanzang replied.

"I went to a great deal of trouble to arrange this vegetarian feast for you," the she–devil said. "Goodness only knows where that feathered brute flew in from and smashed our crockery."

"Smashing the crockery doesn't really matter," the junior demons said, "but all the food has been spilt on the floor. It's too dirty to eat now." Sanzang by now realized that this was all the result of Monkey's magic, but he dared not say so.

"Little ones," said the she–devil, "I realize now. It must be heaven and earth that sent that thing down here because they can't tolerate my holding the Tang Priest prisoner. Clear all the broken dishes up and lay on another banquet. Never mind whether it's vegetarian or not. Heaven can be our matchmaker and the earth our guarantor. After that the Tang Priest and I will become man and wife." We will say no more of her as she took the Tang Priest to sit in the East corridor.

Instead the story tells of how Monkey flew out, turned back into himself, reached the entrance to the cave and shouted, "Open up!"

"Friar Sand," Pig shouted, "our big brother's here." As the two of them drew their weapons away Monkey sprang out.

"Is there an evil spirit in there?" Pig asked, grabbing hold of him. "Is the master in there?"

"Yes, yes," said Monkey.

"The master must be having a hard time in there," said Pig. "Are his arms tied behind his back? Or is he all roped up? Is she going to steam him or boil him?"

"None of them," Monkey replied. "She'd just had a vegetarian feast served and was going to do it with him."

"So you've been lucky then," said Pig. "You must have drunk a wedding toast."

"Idiot!" retorted Monkey, "Never mind about having a wedding drink. I can hardly keep him alive."

"Then why are you here?" Pig asked.

Monkey told how he had seen the master and done his transformations, ending, "Don't let your fears run away with you, brothers. The master's here, and when I go back in this time I'll definitely rescue him."

Going back inside, Monkey turned into a fly and landed on the gate－tower to listen. He could hear the she－devil snorting with fury as she gave instructions within the pavilion.

"Little ones, bring whatever there is, vegetarian or not, and burn paper as offerings to the deities. I'll ask heaven and earth to be the matchmakers. I'm definitely going to marry him."

When Monkey heard this he smiled to himself and thought, "That she－devil's completely shameless. She's locked a monk up in her home and now she's going to mess around with him in broad daylight. But don't be in too much of a hurry. Give me time to go in and have a look round." With a buzz he flew along the corridor to see the master sitting inside, tears streaming down his face.

Monkey squeezed in, landed on Sanzang's head and called, "Master." Recognizing the voice, Sanzang sprang to his feet and said with tooth－gnashing fury, "Macaque! Other people get their courage from a big gall, but they have to wrap their bodies around it. Your gall is so big that you wrap it round your body. You used your magical powers of transformation to smash the crockery, but what use is that? By fighting that she－devil you've only made her more sex－crazed than ever. She is arranging a banquet with vegetarian and impure food all mixed up and is determined to mate with me. Where will this all end?"

Smiling to himself again, Monkey replied, "Don't be angry with me, Master. I've got a way to save you."

Chapter 82

1152

Journey to the West

"How will you save me?" the Tang Priest asked.

"When I flew up just now," said Monkey, "I saw that she has a garden behind here. You must lure her into the garden to fool around and I'll rescue you from there."

"How will you rescue me from the garden?" the Tang Priest asked.

"Go to the peach trees in the garden with her and stay there. Wait till I've flown to a branch of the peach tree and turned into a red peach. When you want to eat a peach pick the red one first— —that will be me. She'll be bound to pick one too. You must insist on giving her the red one. Once she's swallowed it I'll be in her stomach. When I tear her stomach to pieces and rip her guts to shreds she'll be dead and you'll be freed."

"With your powers you ought to fight her," said Sanzang. "Why do you want to get into her stomach?"

"You don't understand, Master," Monkey replied. "If it were easy to get in and out of this cave of hers I would be able to fight her. But this place is very hard to get into or out of: the way out is complicated and difficult. If I started a fight with her all the fiends in her den, young and old, would overpower me. Then how would it end? We must act carefully if we're all to make a clean getaway."

Sanzang nodded, believing all that Monkey said, adding only, "You must stay with me."

"I know," said monkey, "I know. I'll be on your head."

When master and disciple had settled their plan Sanzang leaned forward, took hold of the bars in the corridor's gates and called out, "Lady, lady."

As soon as she heard this the evil spirit came rushing over, a simpering smile on her face, to ask, "What do you have to say to me,

my wonderful darling?"

"Lady," replied Sanzang, "ever since leaving Chang'an and starting on my journey to the West I have had to cross mountains and rivers every single day. When I was staying in the Zhenhai Monastery last night I caught a bad chill and I have been in a sweat today. I was just beginning to feel a little better today when in your kindness, good lady, you brought me into your immortals' palace. As I have been sitting here all day I am now feeling in rather low spirits again. Could you take me somewhere to cheer myself up and have a little fun?"

The evil spirit was utterly delighted. "So you're feeling a bit interested, are you, my wonderful darling?" she said. "You and I will go into the garden for some fun. Little ones," she called, "fetch the key, open the garden gates, and sweep the paths in the garden." The demons all hurried off to open the gates and tidy the place up.

Meanwhile the evil spirit was opening the screen and helping the Tang Priest out. Just watch the many young demons— —all willowy beauties with oiled hair and powdered faces— —crowding around the Tang Priest as they head for the garden. What a splendid monk he was, walking amid these beauties in their gauze and brocade for no other purpose than to be deaf and dumb. If instead of having an iron heart set on the Buddha he had been any ordinary man susceptible to wine and women he would never have succeeded in fetching the scriptures.

When they reached the entrance to the garden the evil spirit whispered seductively, "My wonderful darling, let's have some fun here— —it'll cheer you up." They went into the garden hand in hand, and when he looked up he saw that it was indeed a splendid place. This is what could be seen: Chapter 82

All over the winding paths

Bluish lichens grow.

Secluded gauze windows

Kept dark by embroidered curtains.

When the breeze arises

Silks and brocades float in the air.

When the gentle rain stops falling

The smooth white skin and jade—like flesh are revealed.

The sun—scorched apricot

Is red as an immortal's rainbow clothes spread out to dry;

The plantain in the moonlight

Is bluer than Lady Taizhen waving her feather fan.

Whitewashed walls enclose

The golden orioles that sing in ten thousand willows.

Within the empty halls

Butterflies flit among begonias in the courtyard.

Look at the Hall of Crystallized Perfumes,

The Green Moth Hall,

The Hall to Recover from Drunkenness,

The Hall of Longing,

Rolling up the brilliance, one behind the other.

On the red curtains

Hooks hold tassels like prawn whiskers.

Now look at the Pavilion to Ease Pain

The Pavilion of Simplicity,

The Pavilion of Thrushes,

Chapter 82

1154

Journey to the West

The Four Rains Pavilion,

All towering and lofty,

And bearing on decorated tablets

Their names in archaic script.

Look too at the Pool Where Cranes Bathe,

The Goblet—washing Pool,

The Pool of Delight in the Moon,

The Pool for Cleansing Tassels,

Where amid duckweed and algae the gold scales shine.

Then there is the Kiosk of Ink Flowers,

The Kiosk of Strange Boxes,

The Interesting Kiosk,

The Kiosk for Admiring the Clouds

Where bubbles like green ants float on the wine in jade ladles and goblets.

Around the pools and pavilions

Stand rocks from Lake Taihu,

Rocks of purple crystal,

Yingluo rocks,

Jin River rocks,

Greenish and overgrown with tiger—whisker rushes.

East and West of the kiosks and balls are found

A Wooden Mountain,

A Turquoise Screen Mountain,

A Howling Wind Mountain,

A Jade Mushroom Mountain,

All covered in phoenix – tail bamboo.

Chapter 82

1155

Journey to the West

Trellises of briar roses,

And garden roses,

Growing by a swing,

As a curtain of silk and brocade.

A Pine Pavilion,

A Magnolia Pavilion,

Opposite a Saussurea Pavilion,

Forming a wall of jade with embroidered hangings.

Herbaceous and tree peonies are rivals in luxuriance;

The night – closing magnolias and the jasmine

Are charming every year.

Moist with dewdrops are the purple buds:

They ought to be painted or drawn.

The red hibiscus fills the sky with flaming splendor,

A marvellous subject for poetry.

When it comes to fine scenery

This makes Lang Garden or Penglai not worth a mention;

And as for the flowers,

The finest peonies of Luoyang count for nothing beside them.

In the battle of the blossoms late in the spring

The garden lacks only the flowers of jade.

The venerable elder led the she – devil by the hand as they strolled in the garden, admiring the endless displays of rare and exotic blooms. As they went through many a hall and pavilion he really did seem to be going into an exquisite place. Looking up, he realized that he was by the peach grove. Monkey pinched his master's head to remind him.

Flying to a branch of a peach tree Brother Monkey shook himself and turned into a red peach, and a most fetchingly red one at that. "Lady," the venerable elder said to the evil spirit, "what beautifully scented flowers Chapter 82

and ripe fruit you have in this garden.

The blooms are so fragrant bees vie for their nectar;

The birds all compete for the fruit on the branches.

Why are some of the peaches on the trees red and some green?"

"If there were no Yin and Yang in the heavens the sun and moon would not be bright," the evil spirit replied with a smile. "If there were no Yin and Yang in the earth the plants and trees would not grow. And if there were no Yin and Yang among people there would be no sexual difference. The peaches on the Southern Yang side of these trees are red because they ripen first in the sun's heat. The peaches on the Northern Yin side are green because they get no sun and are still unripe. It's all because of the Yin and the Yang."

"Thank you, lady, for your explanation," Sanzang replied. "I did not know that." He then reached out and picked a red peach, while the evil spirit also picked a green one.

Sanzang bowed as he handed the red one respectfully to the evil spirit with the words, "Lady, you love what is attractive, so won't you take this red peach and give me the green one?"

The she – devil made the exchange, thinking with concealed delight, "What a nice monk. He really is a good man. He is being so loving to

me even before we're man and wife." With great pleasure she paid him her affectionate respects. As the Tang Priest started to eat the green peach at once the evil spirit was delighted to do likewise, opening her mouth to bite into the red one. When she parted her red lips and revealed her silver teeth the impatient Monkey did not give her time to bite him but rolled straight down her throat into her stomach.

"Reverend gentleman," the terrified evil spirit said, "that peach is a terror. Why did it roll straight down and not let me bite it?"

"Lady," Sanzang replied, "the first ripe fruits of a garden are very delicious. That is why it went down so fast."

"But it shot straight down before I'd had time to spit the stone out," the evil spirit replied.

"Because you are such a lover of what is fine and beautiful and enjoyed it so much," said Sanzang, "you swallowed it before you could bring the stone out."

Once inside her stomach Monkey turned back into himself. "Master," he called, "no need to argue with her now. I've succeeded."

"Don't be too hard on her, disciple," Sanzang replied.

"Who are you talking to?" the evil spirit asked when she heard this. "I am talking to my disciple Sun Wukong," Sanzang replied.

"Where is he?" the evil spirit asked.

"In your stomach," Sanzang replied. "He was the red peach you have just eaten."

"That's the end of me," exclaimed the evil spirit in horror. "If that ape's got into my stomach I'm dead. Sun the Novice, why did you go to such lengths to get into my stomach?"

"No particular reason," replied Monkey from inside her. "I just wanted to eat the six leaves of your liver and your lungs, and your heart with its three hairs and seven apertures. I'm going to clean your insides right out and leave you a skeleton spirit."

This sent the evil spirit's souls scattering in terror and shivering and shaking she clung tightly to the Tang Priest and said, "Reverend gentleman, I had thought that

Our destinies were from former lives joined by a red thread;

Our love was as close as the water and the fish.

I never imagined that we lovebirds would be parted

Or that the phoenixes would fly to East and West.

When the waters rose under Lan Bridge the rendezvous failed;

The meeting came to nothing in the misty temple.

After brief joy we are parted once more;

In whatever year will I meet you again?"

When Monkey heard all this from inside her stomach he was afraid that the venerable elder would have another attack of benevolence and let her talk her way out of the problem. Thereupon he started to wield fist and foot, striking out in martial postures and leveling everything around him. He punched her stomach almost to ribbons. Unable to bear the pain, the evil spirit collapsed in the dust, not daring to utter a single word for some time. As she was not speaking Monkey imagined that she must be dead and eased off.

She then recovered her breath to some extent and called out, "Where are you, little ones?" Now once in the garden, the creatures had all had the understanding to go off picking flowers, playing in the grass and amusing themselves, leaving the she–devil alone with the Tang Priest for a romantic conversation. As soon as they heard her calling they rushed over to see the evil spirit lying on the ground, her face a terrible color as she groaned, unable to move.

They hurriedly helped her up, crowding round and asking, "What's wrong, madam? Have you had a heart attack?"

"No, no," the evil spirit replied. "Don't ask any questions. I've got someone inside me. Take the monk outside if you want to save my life."

Chapter 82

The junior devils actually did start to carry the Tang Priest, at which Monkey yelled from inside her belly,

"Don't any of you dare carry him. You must take my master out yourself. I'll only spare your life when you've carried him outside."

This left the evil spirit with no choice as all she cared about was saving her skin. At once she struggled to her feet, lifted the Tang Priest on her back and headed outside, followed by the junior devils asking, "Where are you going, Madam?"

To this the evil spirit replied,

"'As long as the lakes and the bright moon remain

I'll surely find somewhere to put my golden hook.'

Once I've taken this wretch outside I'll find myself another man."

The splendid evil spirit went straight by cloud to the mouth of the cave, where the clang of weapons and wild shouts could be heard.

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "why can I hear weapons outside?"

"It's Pig rubbing his rake," replied Monkey. "Give him a shout."

"Bajie," Sanzang shouted.

"Friar Sand," said Pig when he heard this, "the master's out." The two of them drew back their rake and staff, letting the evil spirit carry the Tang Priest out. Indeed:

The Mind Ape had subdued a monster from the inside;

The Earth and Wood door guards welcomed the holy monk.

If you don't know whether the evil spirit's life was spared listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 83

The Mind – Ape Recognizes the Refiner of Cinnabar

The Girl Reverts to Her True Nature

The story tells how after Sanzang had been carried out of the cave by the evil spirit Friar Sand went up to him and asked, "Where is my oldest brother now that you have come out, Master?"

Chapter 83

1159

Journey to the West

"He must know what he's doing," said Pig. "I expect he's exchanged himself for the master to get him out."

"Your brother is in her stomach," Sanzang replied, pointing at the evil spirit.

"It is terribly filthy," Pig said. "Whatever are you doing in there? Come out."

"Open your mouth," said Monkey from inside, "I'm coming out." The she – devil did indeed open her mouth wide. Monkey made himself very small, sprang up into her throat, and was just about to emerge when he became worried that she might cheat and bite him. He then pulled out his iron cudgel, blew on it with magic breath, called "Change!" and turned it into a jujube stone with which he wedged her jaw open. With one bound he then leapt outside, taking the iron cudgel with him, bowed to resume his own form and raised his cudgel to strike her. At once she drew a pair of fine swords, parrying his blow with a loud clang. They fought a splendid battle on the mountain top.

A pair of dancing, flying swords defended her face;

The gold – banded cudgel struck at her head.

One was a heaven – born monkey, the Mind – ape;

The other had the bones of an earth – born girl turned spirit;

The two of them both had been smitten by anger:

Hatred arose at the celebration; the party was ended.

One longed to mate with the primal masculinity,

The other wanted to defeat the incarnation of the female.

When the cudgel was raised to the sky cold mists spread out;

The swords shook up the earth's black dirt like a sieve.

Because the elder would visit the Buddha

They were locked in fierce combat, each showing great prowess.

When water conflicts with fire motherhood is out;

When Yin and Yang cannot combine each goes its own way.

After the two had been fighting for a very long time

The earth moved, the mountains shook and the trees were destroyed.

Chapter 83

1160

Journey to the West

The sight of their struggle made Pig grumble resentfully about Monkey. "Brother," he said, turning to Friar Sand, "our elder brother is messing around. When he was in her stomach just now he could have used his fists to make her belly red with blood, rip it open and come out. That would have settled her score. Why did he have to come out through her mouth and fight her? Why did he let her run wild?"

"You're right," Friar Sand replied, "but it was thanks to him that the master was rescued from the depths of the cave, even if he is in a fight with her now. Let's ask the master to sit here by himself while we two use our weapons to help our brother beat the evil spirit."

"No, no," said Pig with a wave of his hand. "He's got his magic powers. We'd be useless."

"What a thing to say," retorted Friar Sand. "This is in all of our interests. We may not be much use, but even a fart can strengthen a breeze."

Now that the idiot's dander was up he brandished his rake and shouted, "Come on!" Ignoring the master, they rode the wind and went for the evil spirit, striking wildly at her with their rake and staff. The evil spirit, who was already finding Brother Monkey too much to handle, realized that she would be unable to hold out against two more of them. At once she turned and fled.

"After her, brothers," Monkey shouted. Seeing that they were so hot on

her heels the evil spirit took the embroidered shoe off her right foot, blew on it with a magic breath, said a spell, called "Change!" and turned it into her own double swinging a pair of sword. Then she shook herself, turned into a puff of wind and went straight back. There she was, fleeing for her life because she was no match for them. What happened next was quite unexpected: Sanzang's evil star had still not gone away. As the evil spirit reached the archway in front of the entrance to the cave she saw the Tang Priest sitting there by himself, so she went up to him, threw her arm round him, grabbed the luggage, bit through the bridle, and carried him back inside, horse and all.

The story tells not of her but of Pig, who exploited an opening to fell the evil spirit with one blow of his rake, only to find that she was really an embroidered shoe.

"You pair of idiots," said Monkey when he saw it. "You should have been looking after the master. Nobody asked you to help."

"What about that, then, Friar Sand?" said Pig. "I said we shouldn't come here. That ape has had a brainstorm.

We beat the monster for him and he gets angry with us."

"Beaten the monster indeed!" Monkey said. "The monster fooled me yesterday by leaving a shoe behind when I was fighting her. Goodness knows how the master is now that you've left him. Let's go straight back and see."

The three of them hurried back to find that the master had disappeared: there was no sign at all of him, the luggage or the white horse. Pig started rushing all over the place in a panic with Friar Sand searching alongside him. The Great Sage Sun was also most anxious. As he searched he noticed half of the bridle rope lying askew beside the path.

Picking it up, he could not hold back his tears as he called in a loud voice, "Master! When I went I took my leave of you three and the horse, and all I find on my return is this rope." It was indeed a case of Being reminded of the steed by seeing the saddle,

Missing the beloved amid one's tears.

The sight of Monkey's tears gave Pig an uncontrollable urge to throw back his head and laugh out loud.

"Blockhead," said Monkey abusively. "Do you want us to break up again?"

"That's not what I mean," said Pig, still laughing. "The master's been carried back into the cave. As the saying goes, 'third time lucky'. You've already been into the cave twice, so if you go in again you're sure to rescue the master."

"Very well then," said Monkey, wiping away his tears, "as this is the way things are I have no choice. I'll have to go back in. You two don't have to worry about the luggage or the horse any more, so guard the cave—mouth properly."

The splendid Great Sage turned round and sprang into the cave. This time he did no transformations but appeared in his own dharma form. This is what he was like:

His cheeks looked strange but his heart was strong;

As a monster since childhood his magic was mighty.

A misshapen face that looked like a saddle;

Eyes fiery bright with golden light.

His hairs were harder than needles of steel,

And striking was the pattern of his tigerskin kilt.

In the sky he could scatter a myriad clouds;

In the sea he could stir up thousandfold waves.

Once with his strength he fought heavenly kings,

Putting a hundred and eight thousand warriors to flight.

His title was Great Sage Equaling Heaven;

He was an expert with the gold—banded cudgel.

Today in the West he was using his powers

To return to the cave and rescue Sanzang.

Chapter 83

1162

Journey to the West

Watch Monkey as he stops his cloud and heads straight for the evil spirit's residence, where he found the gates under the gate towers shut. Not caring whether or not it was the right thing to do, he smashed them open with one swing of his cudgel and charged inside. It was completely quiet and deserted, and the Tang Priest was nowhere to be seen in the corridor. The tables and chairs in the pavilion and all the utensils had completely disappeared. As the cave measured over a hundred miles around, the evil spirit had very many hiding places in it. This was where she had brought the Tang Priest the previous time, only to be found by Monkey, so after catching him this time she had moved him elsewhere in case Monkey came looking for him again.

Not knowing where they had gone, Monkey stamped his foot and beat his chest with fury, letting himself call out at the top of his voice, "Master! You are a Tang Sanzang formed in misfortune, a pilgrim monk molded from disaster. Hmm. I know the way well enough. Why isn't he here? Where should I look for him?"

Just when he was howling with impatience and anxiety his nose was struck by a whiff of incense, which brought him back to himself. "This incense smoke is coming from the back," he thought, "so I suppose they must be there." He strode in at the back, his cudgel in his hand, but still saw no sign of life. What he did see were three side rooms. Near the back wall was a lacquered offertory table carved with dragons on which stood a gilt incense–burner. From this came heavily scented incense smoke. On the table was a tablet inscribed with letters of gold to which the offerings were being made. The letters read, "Honoured Father, Heavenly King Li." In a slightly inferior position was written, "Honoured Elder Brother, Third Prince Nezha."

The sight filled Monkey with delight. He stopped searching for the monster and the Tang Priest, rubbed his cudgel between his fingers to make it as small as an embroidery needle, tucked it inside his ear, gathered up the tablet and the incense–burner with a sweep of his arms and went straight back out through the gates on his clouds. He was still chortling with glee when he reached the mouth of the cave.

When Pig and Friar Sand heard him they unblocked the entrance to the cave and greeted him with, "You look so happy you must have saved the master, elder brother."

"No need for us to save him," Monkey replied with a smile. "We can ask this tablet for him."

"But that tablet isn't an evil spirit and it can't talk," said Pig, "so how can you ask it for him?"

"Look at it," said Monkey, putting the tablet on the ground. When Friar Sand went up to look he saw

"Honoured Father, Heavenly King Li" and "Honoured Elder Brother, Third Prince Nezha" written on it.

"What does this mean?" Friar Sand asked.

"The evil spirit makes offerings to it," Monkey replied. "When I charged into her place there was nobody about, only this tablet. I think she must be a daughter of Heavenly King Li and the younger sister of Prince Nezha who so longed for the lower world that she pretended to be an evil spirit and carried our master off. So who better to demand the master from? You two keep guard here while I take this tablet up to Heaven to lodge a complaint with the Jade Emperor and force those heavenly kings to give our master back."

"Brother," said Pig, "there's a saying that goes, 'Bring a capital charge and pay for it with your own head.' You can only do a thing like that if you're in the right. Besides, a case in the celestial court isn't something to be started lightly. You'd better tell me what sort of case you're going to bring."

"I know what I'm going to do," Monkey replied. "I'm going to produce this tablet and incense–burner as evidence and submit a written deposition too."

"What will you write in your deposition?" Pig asked him. "Will you tell me?"

Chapter 83

1163

Journey to the West

To this Brother Monkey replied, "The complainant Sun Wukong, whose age is stated in this document, is the disciple of the monk Tang Sanzang who is going from the Tang court in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. He submits a complaint that an imitation evil spirit has committed a kidnap. Li Jing, the Pagoda–carrying Heavenly King, and his son Prince Nezha have been slack in controlling their women's quarters. He has allowed his daughter to run away and turn into an evil spirit in the Bottomless Cave in Mount Pitfall, where she has lured countless deluded people to their deaths. She has now carried my master into a remote corner where he cannot be found. If I had not submitted this complaint I would have been deeply worried that the heavenly king and his son in their wickedness had deliberately incited his daughter to become a spirit and cause general disaster. I beg Your Majesty in your mercy to summon the heavenly king to attend a hearing, bring the demon under control and deliver my master. I would be deeply grateful if Your Majesty would determine the correct penalty for this offence. This is my respectful submission."

When Pig and Friar Sand heard this they said with delight, "Brother, you're bound to win if you submit so reasonable a complaint. Be as quick as you can. If you lose any time you may be too late to stop the evil spirit killing our master."

"I'll hurry," said Brother Monkey, "I'll hurry. I'll be back in the time it takes to cook rice at the longest or to make a cup of tea if I'm quick."

With one bound the splendid Great Sage carried the tablet and the incense–burner straight up by auspicious cloud to the outside of the Southern Gate of Heaven, where the Heavenly Kings Powerful and Protector of the Nation greeted him with bows, letting him in and not daring to block his way.

He went straight to the Hall of Universal Radiance, where the four heavenly teachers Zhang, Ge, Xu, and Qiu showed him great courtesy and asked, "Why are you here, Great Sage?"

"I've got a complaint here," Monkey replied. "There are a couple of people I want to lodge a complaint against."

"The scoundrel," thought the appalled heavenly teachers, "who can he be wanting to sue?" They had no choice but to lead him to the Hall of Miraculous Mist and submit their report to the Jade Emperor, who ordered that Monkey be summoned hi. Monkey then put down the tablet and the incense–burner, bowed to the emperor, and presented

his complaint. This was taken by the Ancient Immortal Ge, who spread it out on the emperor's table. When the emperor had read it through from the beginning and learned what had happened he approved the deposition, wrote an imperial rescript on it, and sent the Great White Planet, the Metal Planet Changgeng, to the Cloud Tower Palace to summon the Pagoda – carrying Heavenly King Li to the imperial presence.

Monkey then stepped forward and submitted this memorial: "I beg that the Heavenly Sovereign will punish him effectively as otherwise there will be further trouble."

"Let the complainant go too," the Jade Emperor ordered.

"What, me?" said Monkey.

"His Majesty has issued his decree," said the Four Heavenly Teachers, "so you go with the Metal Planet."

Monkey then went with the planet by cloud. They were soon at the Cloud Tower Palace, the residence of the heavenly king. The Metal Star saw a page standing at the palace gates.

Recognizing the planet, the boy went inside to report, "The Great White Planet is here."

The heavenly king then came out to welcome the planet. Seeing that the planet was carrying a decree from the Jade Emperor, the heavenly king ordered incense to be burned before turning round and seeing to his fury that Monkey had come too. Why do you think he was furious? When Monkey had made great havoc in heaven all those years earlier the Jade Emperor had appointed the heavenly king as Demon – quelling High Marshal and Prince Nezha as Great God of the Three Altars of the Seas to lead the heavenly troops and subdue Monkey.

They had been repeatedly worsted in battle. It was resentment at this defeat five hundred years earlier that goaded him to fury.

"Old Changgeng," he said to the planet, showing his irritation, "what kind of decree have you brought here?"

"It is a case that the Great Sage Sun has brought against you," the planet replied.

The heavenly king had been in a bad enough temper before this, but the word "case" provoked a thunderous outburst of fury: "What case has he got against me?"

"He accuses you of masquerading as an evil spirit and kidnapping," the planet said. "Will you please burn incense and read it for yourself."

Seething with anger, the heavenly king had an incense table set up, looked into the sky as he thanked the emperor for his grace, made his obeisances, opened out the decree and read it through.

When he saw what it contained he thumped the incense table and exclaimed, "That ape has trumped up a pack of lies."

"Please keep your temper," the planet replied. "A tablet and an incense—burner have been submitted to His Majesty as evidence. He says it was your daughter who did it."

"All I have are my three sons and a single daughter," said the heavenly king. "My elder son Jinzha serves the Tathagata Buddha as a Vanguard Guardian of the Law Dharma. My second son Moksa is a disciple of Guanyin in the Southern Ocean. My third son Nezha stays with me as my escort at all times. My daughter Zhenying is only six and an innocent child. She could not possibly have become an evil spirit. If you don't believe me I'll carry her out to show you. This ape is really a disgrace. Never mind that I'm one of the most distinguished elder statesmen in heaven and been given the authority to cut heads off before reporting to the throne: not even an ordinary commoner in the lower world should be falsely accused. As the Legal Code says,

'the penalty for false accusation is three grades higher than the crime alleged.'"

He then ordered his underlings to fetch demon—binding rope and tie Monkey up. The Mighty Miracle God, General Fishbelly and General Yaksha who were drawn up outside the court rushed on Monkey and tied him up.

"Heavenly King Li," the Metal Planet pleaded, "please don't invite disaster. I have come here with him from the imperial presence under orders from His Majesty to summon you. That rope of yours is heavy, and it could very quickly hurt him badly or strangle him."

"Metal Star," the heavenly king replies, "there's no way I'm going to stand for his false, trumped – up charge.

Won't you take a seat while I fetch my demon – hacking sword to kill this ape with? I'll report to His Majesty with you after I've done that." At the sight of the heavenly king fetching the sword the planet trembled with terror.

Chapter 83

1165

Journey to the West

"You've made a terrible mistake," he said to Monkey. "A case before the emperor isn't to be lightly started.

You've brought this disaster on yourself by not finding the facts out properly and you'll die for it. This is terrible."

Monkey was completely unafraid. "Don't worry, old man," he said with a chuckle, "this is nothing. This has always been my way of doing business: I lose out at first and win in the end."

Before the words were all out of his mouth the heavenly king's sword swung down towards Monkey's head.

But Prince Nezha was already in front of Monkey, parrying the blow with his great sword used for cutting men in half at the waist and calling, "Please calm your temper, father."

This greatly shocked the heavenly king. Very strange! If a son used his broadsword to block his father's cutlass he ought to be bawled out, so why did Nezha's father turn pale with shock?

Now when this son had been born to the heavenly king the word *Ne* was written on the palm of his left hand and *Zha* on his right one, which was why he was called Nezha. When only three days old the young prince had caused great trouble by plunging into the sea to clean himself. He had kicked the water crystal palace down, captured a dragon and insisted on pulling its sinews out to make a belt. On learning about this, the heavenly king had been so worried about the disastrous consequences that he had decided to kill the boy.

This had made Nezha so indignant that he had seized a sword, cut off his flesh and returned it to his mother, then picked his bones clean

and given them back to his father. Having returned his father's seed and his mother's blood he had taken his soul straight off to the Western Paradise to appeal to the Buddha. When the Buddha, who was expounding the sutras to all the Bodhisattvas, heard a call of "Help!" from within his curtained and jeweled canopy he had looked with his wise eyes and seen that it was Nezha's soul. He had made Nezha bones out of green lotus root and clothes from lotus leaves, then recited the spell to revive the dead.

Thus it was that Nezha had come back to life. He had used his divine ability and great magical powers to subdue ninety－six caves of demons through dharma. After this Nezha had wanted to kill his father in revenge for having had to pick the flesh off his own bones, leaving the heavenly king with no choice but to beg the help of the Tathagata Buddha. For the sake of harmony the Buddha had given the heavenly king an intricately－made golden As－You－Will reliquary pagoda, in each story of which were Buddhas radiant with splendor. The Buddha called on Nezha to regard these Buddhas as his father, thereby ending the hatred between them. This is why Heavenly King Li is called the Pagoda－bearer. As the heavenly king was at home off duty that day and not carrying the pagoda he was afraid that Nezha was set on revenge. This was why he turned pale with terror.

So he turned his hand back to take the golden pagoda from its stand and hold it as he asked Nezha, "What do you want to say to me, son? Why have you parried my sword with your broadsword?"

Throwing his broadsword down, Nezha kowtowed to his father as he replied, "Father, Your Majesty, there is a daughter of our family in the lower world."

"My boy," the heavenly king replied, "I have only had you four children. Where could I have got another daughter from?"

"You have forgotten, Your Majesty," Nezha replied. "The girl was once an evil spirit. Three hundred years ago she became a monster. She stole and ate some of the Tathagata's incense, flowers and candles on Vulture Peak, and the Tathagata sent us to capture her with heavenly soldiers. When she was caught she should have been beaten to death, but the Tathagata said,

'Raise fish in deep water but never catch them;

Feed deer in the depths of the mountains in the hope of eternal life.'

So we spared her life. In her gratitude she bowed to you as her adoptive father, Your Majesty, and to me as her elder brother. She set up a tablet to us in the lower world to burn incense. I never imagined she'd become an evil spirit again and try to ruin the Tang Priest. Now Sun the Novice has trailed her to her den and brought the tablet up here to use in a case against us before the Jade Emperor. She is your adopted daughter, not my real sister."

This came as a terrible shock to the heavenly king. "Son," he said, "I really had forgotten. What's she called?"

"She has three names," the prince replied. Where she originally came from she was called Gold–nosed White–haired Mouse Spirit. Then she was called Half–Bodhisattva–Guanyin because she had stolen the incense, flowers and candles. When she was forgiven and sent down to the lower world she changed her name again and became Lady Earth–gusher." Only then did the heavenly king come to his senses. He put his pagoda down and started to untie Monkey himself. At this Monkey started playing it up.

"Don't you dare try to untie me!" he said. "If you want to do something you can carry me roped up as I am to see the emperor. Then I'll win my case." The heavenly king felt weak from terror and the prince could say nothing. Everybody fell back.

The Great Sage meanwhile was rolling about and playing it up, insisting that the heavenly king take him to the emperor. The heavenly king could do nothing except beg the Metal Planet to put in a good word for him.

"There is an old saying," the planet replied, "that one should always be lenient. You went too far: you tied him up and were going to kill him. The monkey is a notorious trouble–maker. How do you expect me to deal with him? From what your worthy son has said, she is your daughter, even though adopted rather than your own, and a child by adoption is especially dear. However one argues it you are guilty."

"Surely you can find some way of putting in a good word for me and helping me off the hook, venerable planet," said the heavenly king.

"I would like to end the quarrel between you," the planet replied, "but I have never done him a good turn that I can remind him of."

"Tell him how it was you who proposed that he should be amnestied and given an official post," said the heavenly king.

The Metal Planet did then step forward, stroke Brother Monkey and say, "Great Sage, won't you let us take the rope off before going to see the emperor, just for my sake?"

"No need to bother, old man," Monkey replied. "I'm a good roller and I can roll all the way there."

"You've got no decent feelings, you monkey," said the planet with a smile. "I did you some good turns in the old days, but you won't do this little thing for me."

Chapter 83

1167

Journey to the West

"What good turn did you ever do me?" Monkey asked.

"When you were a monster on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit you subdued tigers and dragons, forcibly removed yourself from the register of death and assembled hordes of fiends to run wild and wreak havoc.

Heaven wanted to have you arrested. It was only because I made strong representations that an edict of amnesty and recruitment was issued and you were summoned to Heaven to be appointed Protector of the Horses. You drank some of the Jade Emperor's wine of immortality, and it was only because I made strong representations again that you were given the title of Great Sage Equaling Heaven. But you refused to know your place. You stole the peaches and the wine and robbed Lord Lao Zi of his elixir, and so it went on till you ended up in a state of no death and no birth. If it hadn't been for me you'd never have got where you are today."

"As the ancients put it," Monkey replied, "'Don't even share a grave with an old man when you're dead: all he'll do is complain.' I was just a Protector of the Horses who made havoc in the heavenly palace: there was nothing much apart from that. Oh well, never mind. I'll show you a bit of consideration as you're such an old man. He can untie me himself." Only then did the heavenly king dare step forward, untie the rope, and ask Brother Monkey to dress and take the seat of honour while they all took it in turn to pay their respects to him.

"Old man," Monkey said to the Metal Planet, "what about it then? I told you I lose first and win later. That's my way of doing business. Make him hurry and see the emperor: delay could be disastrous for my master."

"Don't be impatient," the Metal Planet said. "After everything that's happened we should take a cup of tea."

"If you drink his tea, accept favours from him, take a bribe to let a criminal escape, and treat imperial edicts with disrespect I wonder what you'll be charged with," Monkey replied.

"I won't stop for tea," the Metal Planet replied, "I won't stop for tea. You're even trying to frame me. Hurry up, Heavenly King Li, we must be on our way." The heavenly king dared not go for fear that Monkey would concoct some unfounded story and start playing it up: if Monkey started talking wildly he would be unable to argue against him. So once again the heavenly king pleaded with the Metal Planet to put in a good word for him.

"I have a suggestion to make," the planet said to Monkey. "Will you follow it?"

"I've already agreed about being tied up and hacked at," Monkey replied. "What else have you to say? Tell me! Tell me! If it's a good idea I'll follow it; and if it isn't, don't blame me."

"'Fight a lawsuit for one day and it'll go on for ten,'" said the Metal Planet. "You brought a case before the emperor saying that the evil spirit is the heavenly king's daughter and the heavenly king says she isn't. You two will argue endlessly in front of His Majesty, but I tell you that a day in heaven is a year in the lower world. In that year the evil spirit will have your master under her control in the cave, and she won't just have married him. By then there may have been a happy event and she may have had a little baby monk. Then your great enterprise will be ruined."

"Yes," thought Monkey, his head bowed, "when I left Pig and Friar Sand I said I'd be back in the time it takes to cook a meal at longest and at quickest before they could make a cup of tea. I've been ages already and it might be too late. Old man," he said aloud, "I'll take your advice. How do we obey this imperial decree?"

"Have Heavenly King Li muster his troops and go down with you to subdue the demon," the Metal Planet replied, "while I report back to the emperor."

Chapter 83

1168

Journey to the West

"What will you say?" Monkey asked.

"I'll report that the plaintiff has absconded and that the defendant is therefore excused," the planet replied.

"That's very fine," said Monkey with a grin. "I show you consideration and you accuse me of absconding. Tell him to muster his troops and wait for me outside the Southern Gate of Heaven while you and I report back on our mission."

"If he says anything when he's there I'll be accused of treason," exclaimed the heavenly king with terror.

"What do you take me for?" asked Monkey. "I'm a real man. Once I've given my word a team of horses couldn't take it back. I'd never slander you."

The heavenly king thanked Monkey, who went with the Metal Planet to report back on their mission, while the heavenly king mustered his heavenly troops and went straight to the outside of the Southern Gate of Heaven.

When the Metal Planet and Monkey had their audience with the Jade Emperor they said, "The person who has trapped the Tang Priest is the Golden–nosed White–haired Mouse turned spirit. She has fraudulently set up a tablet to the heavenly king and his son. As soon as he found out, the heavenly king mustered his troops to go and subdue the demon. We beg your Celestial Majesty to forgive him."

Once the Jade Emperor knew what had happened he dropped the prosecution in his heavenly mercy. Monkey then went back on his cloud to the outside of the Southern Gate of Heaven, where he found the heavenly king and the prince waiting for him with their heavenly soldiers draw up on parade. The heavenly commanders met the Great Sage amid blustering winds and seething mists, then they all took their clouds straight down to Mount Pitfall.

Pig and Friar Sand were wide–eyed at the sight of the heavenly hosts coming down with Brother Monkey.

Greeting the heavenly king with due courtesy, the idiot said, "We have put you to great trouble in coming here."

"You don't realize, Marshal Tian Peng," the heavenly king replied, "that it was because my son and I accepted a joss–stick from her that the evil spirit in her wickedness captured your master. Please don't be angry with us for being so long. Is this Mount Pitfall? Where is the entrance to the cave?"

"I know the way very well by now," said Monkey. "This cave is called the Bottomless Cave and it measures over a hundred miles around. The evil spirit has a great many holes in it. Last time my master was held in the gate tower with double eaves, but it's deadly quiet now. There's not even the shadow of a demon. I don't know where she's taken him to now." To this the heavenly king replied,

"'No matter how many the tricks she may try

She'll never escape from the nets of the sky.'

We'll think of something else when we get to the cave entrance."

Chapter 83

1169

Journey to the West

They all then started out, and after they had gone three or four miles they reached the great rock. "This is it,"

Monkey said pointing at the entrance that was no larger than the mouth of a large jar.

"You'll never capture the tiger's cub unless you go into the tiger's lair," observed the heavenly king. "Who dares go in first?"

"I'll go," said Monkey.

"No, I'll go first," objected Prince Nezha. "I was the one the emperor ordered to capture the demon."

The idiot then started acting tough, shouting, "It ought to be me first."

"Stop that din," said the heavenly king. "I'll decide. The Great Sage Sun and the prince will go down with the soldiers while we three hold the entrance. Then we'll have a coordinated action inside and outside,

which will make it impossible for her to find her way up to heaven or go further underground. That will show her a bit of our powers."

"Yes, sir," they all said in assent.

Watch as Monkey and Prince Nezha slip into the cave at the head of their troops. As they rode their clouds they looked around and saw that it really was a fine cave:

The pair of sun and moon as before;

A vista of rivers and hills like the other world.

Warm mists spread over pools and wells of pearl;

Much more there is to admire down here.

Crimson houses, painted halls,

Red cliffs, green fields,

Willows in the spring and lotos in the autumn;

A rare and splendid cave heaven.

An instant later they brought their clouds to a halt and went straight to the mansion where the evil spirit had lived before. They went from gateway to gateway in their search, yelling and shouting as they went deeper and deeper inside, trying one place after the next. All the grass for a hundred miles was trampled away. But where was the evil spirit? Where was Sanzang?

"The wicked beast," everyone was saying, "she must have got out of this cave ages ago. She'll be far away by now." What they did not know was that down underneath a dark corner in the Southeast of the cave there was another, smaller cave, where behind a pair of tiny gates there was a tiny cottage with flowers growing in pots and a few canes of bamboo beside the eaves. The atmosphere was dark and heavy with fragrance. This was Chapter 83

where the evil spirit had carried Sanzang and was going to force him to marry her. She was sure that Monkey would never find them; none of them realized that her union was fated to be thwarted.

The junior devils were jabbering away in a great crush when a bolder one among them stretched outside the cave for a look around only for her head to butt into a heavenly soldier, who shouted, "They're here!" At this Monkey flew into a rage, grasped the gold-banded cudgel and charged straight down in. The cave was tiny and all the demons from the big cave were in there, so that when Prince Nezha sent his heavenly soldiers crowding into the attack, not a single one of the demons could hide.

Monkey found the Tang Priest, the dragon horse and the baggage. The senior demon was at her wit's end. All she could do was to kowtow to Prince Nezha, begging him to spare her life.

"We are here to arrest you at the Jade Emperor's command," Prince Nezha replied, "which is not something to be treated lightly. My father and I were nearly in terrible trouble because of you."

He then shouted at the top of his voice, "Heavenly soldiers, fetch demon-binding rope. Tie all those evil spirits up." The senior demon too had to suffer for a while. They all went back out of the cave together by cloud.

Monkey was chuckling with delight when the heavenly king withdrew his guard from the mouth of the cave and greeted Monkey with the words, "Now I can meet your master."

"Many thanks," said Monkey, "many thanks," and he led Sanzang to bow in gratitude to the heavenly king and the prince.

Friar Sand and Pig were all for chopping the senior devil into tiny pieces, but the heavenly king said, "She was arrested at the Jade Emperor's command, and must not be mistreated. We must go to report back on our mission."

The heavenly king and Prince Nezha at the head of their heavenly troops and divine officers escorted the evil spirit as a prisoner to report to the heavenly court and receive the emperor's verdict on her. Meanwhile Brother Monkey guarded the Tang Priest while Friar Sand collected the luggage and Pig went over to the horse and invited the master to ride. Then they all set out along their way again. Indeed:
The silken net had been cut, the golden sea dried up,

The precious lock undone, and troubles left behind.

If you do not know what lay in store for them on their way ahead listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 84

The Indestructible Proteges of the Buddha Complete Enlightenment
The Dharma King Comes to the Truth Through His Own Nature

Chapter 84

1171

Journey to the West

The story tells how Tang Sanzang kept his masculine essence intact and escaped from the terrible snare of mist and flowers. As he headed Westwards with Brother Monkey he did not notice that it was already summer: warm breezes were beginning to blow, and the early summer rain was falling. It was a beautiful sight:

Dark is the shade under tender green;

In the gentle breeze the swallows lead their young.

New lotus leaves are opening on the ponds;

Elegant bamboo is gradually reviving.

The fragrant plants join their blue to the sky;

Mountain flowers carpet all the ground.

Beside the stream the rushes are like swords;

The fiery pomegranate blossom makes the picture even more magnificent.

As the master and his three disciples traveled along enduring the heat they suddenly noticed two rows of tall willows, from under the shade of which an old woman emerged, leaning on a small boy. "Don't go any further, monk," she called out. "Stop your horse and go back East as soon as you can. The road West leads nowhere."

This gave Sanzang so bad a fright that he sprang off the horse, made a gesture of greeting and said,

"Venerable Bodhisattva, in the words of the ancients,

'The sea's breadth allows the fish to leap;

The sky's emptiness lets birds fly.'

How could there possibly be no way to the West?" To this the old woman replied, pointing Westwards, "If you go that way you will come to the capital of Dharmadestructia in a couple of miles. The king formed a hatred of Buddhism in an earlier existence, and in his present life he is punishing it without just cause. Two years ago he made a monstrous vow to kill ten thousand Buddhist monks. In that time he's killed 9,996

unknown monks in succession. He's just waiting for four famous monks to make up his ten thousand so that he will fulfil the vow. If you go into the city you will be throwing away your lives for nothing."

At the sound of this Sanzang was so terrified that he shivered and shook as he replied, "Venerable Bodhisattva, I am deeply moved by your great kindness and infinitely grateful too. But, tell me, is there a suitable way I could take that does not go into the city?"

Chapter 84

1172

Journey to the West

"There's no way round," the old woman replied with a laugh, "no way round. The only way you'll get past it is if you can fly."

At this Pig started shooting his mouth off from where he stood beside them: "Don't try to put us off. We can all fly."

Monkey's fiery eyes with their golden pupils really could distinguish good from evil, and he saw that the old woman and the little boy on whom she was leaning were in fact the Bodhisattva Guanyin and the page Sudhana. He hastily flung himself to the ground and began to kowtow, calling out, "Bodhisattva, your disciple failed to welcome you. I'm sorry."

The Bodhisattva then rose slowly on her multicolored cloud, so startling the venerable elder that his legs gave way under him and he kowtowed as he knelt there for all he was worth. Pig and Friar Sand also fell to their knees in alarm and kowtowed to heaven. A moment later she was heading straight back to the Southern Sea amid auspicious clouds.

Monkey then got up and supported his master as he said, "Get up

please. The Bodhisattva's already gone back to her island."

"Wukong," Sanzang said, "if you knew she was the Bodhisattva why did you not say so before?"

"You ask too many questions," Monkey replied with a grin. "When I started kowtowing wasn't that early enough?"

"It was lucky the Bodhisattva told us that Dharmadestructia, where they kill monks, is ahead of us," Pig and Friar Sand said to Monkey. "Whatever are we to do?"

"Don't be afraid, idiot," Monkey replied. "We've come to no harm from any of the vicious demons and evil monsters we've met already or in the tigers' dens and dragons' pools we've been in. This is just a country of ordinary people. What's there to be so scared of? The only thing is that we can't stay here. It's getting late in the day and some of the villagers are coming back from market in the town. It will be no good if they see we're monks and raise a hue and cry. We'd better take the master away from the main road to some quiet and secluded spot where we can discuss things." Sanzang accepted Monkey's suggestion and they slipped away from the main road to a hollow in the ground where they sat down.

"Brother," said Monkey, "you two look after the master while I turn myself into something and go into town to take a look around. I'll find a side road that we can get away along tonight."

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "don't take this lightly. The royal law is implacable. You must be careful."

"Don't worry," said Monkey with a smile, "don't worry. I can cope."

This said, the Great Sage leapt whistling up into the air. It was very strange: No rope to hold on to above,

No pole to support him below.

Others are all like their parents,

But the weight of his bones was low.

As he stood in the clouds looking down he saw that the city was full of the most happy and auspicious atmosphere. "What a splendid place," Monkey said. "Why are they trying to destroy the Dharma here?" He looked around for a while, and in the gathering dusk he saw:

Bright lights at the crossroads,

Incense and bells in the ninefold hall.

The seven brightest stars shone in the blue heavens,

And the travelers stopped moving in all eight directions.

From the army barracks

The painted bugle could just be heard;

In the drum tower

The copper water–clock began to drip.

All around the evening mists were dense;

Cold fog was thick in the markets.

Two by two the couples went to their beds

As the bright moon's disk was rising in the East.

"If I went down into the streets to look for our way with a face like this," he thought, "anyone I saw would be sure I was a monk. I'd better change." He made a spell with his hands, said the magic words, shook himself and turned into a moth, the sort that flies into the lantern:

A tiny body, a pair of delicate wings,

Who puts out the lamp and flies into the candle when seeking the light.

Formed by changing its own original body,

It makes its magic response in grass that's decaying.

Loving the burning light of the candle's flame,

Endlessly flying around it with never a pause,

The purple – clad moth with its scented wings drives off the fireflies;
What it likes best is the windless calm of the night.

Watch him as he flutters and flies straight to the main streets and the markets, keeping close to the eaves and the corners of the buildings he passes. As he was flying along he noticed an angled row of houses on a corner with a lantern hanging above each doorway.

"They must be celebrating the Lantern Festival here," he thought. "Why else is that line of lighted lanterns there?" Stiffening his wings and flying up for a closer look, he saw that on a square lantern outside the middle house was written, "Accommodation for Commercial Travelers," with "Wang the Second's Inn" beneath it.

Only then did Monkey realize that this was an inn. Stretching his head forward for a closer look he saw eight or nine men inside who had all eaten their supper, taken off their clothes and hats, washed their hands and feet and gone to bed.

"The master will get through," Monkey thought with secret delight. How did he know that? Because he was having a wicked idea: he would wait till they were all asleep, then steal their clothes and hats so that he and his companions could go into the city dressed as laymen.

Oh dear! This was one of those things that don't turn out as you want them to. While Monkey was still thinking about his plan Wang the Second went up to the merchants and said, "Please be vigilant, gentlemen.

We have villains here as well as decent people. You must all be careful about your clothes and luggage."

As you can imagine, the travelling merchants were all very vigilant, and the innkeeper's advice made them more cautious than ever. So they all got out of bed and said, "You're quite right, host. We travelers have a hard time. We're always worried that if there's some emergency when we're asleep we may not wake up; and if things go wrong we're in a mess. You'd better take all our clothes, hats and bags and look after them for us inside. Tomorrow morning you can give them back to us when we get up."

Wang the Second then took all the clothes he could find into his own room. Monkey anxiously spread his wings, flew in there and landed on the hat stand, from where he saw Wang the Second take the lantern down from the door, lower the blinds, and shut the door and window. Only then did he go into his bedroom, undress and lie down.

Now Wang the Second had a wife and two children who were crying and making a noise, in no hurry to sleep.

Wang's wife then started mending a torn piece of clothing, so that she too was still awake. "If I have to wait till that woman stops working and goes to sleep," thought Monkey, "I'll be keeping the master waiting too."

He then started worrying that if he left it till much later the city gates would be shut, so he lost patience and flew down into the flame of the lamp. It was indeed a case of

He was ready to die when he dived at the blaze,

And with brows scarred by fire to live out his days.

Chapter 84

1175

Journey to the West

Having extinguished the lamp he shook himself and turned into a rat who gave a couple of squeaks, jumped down, grabbed hats and clothes and went outside. "Old man," the woman said with alarm, "this is terrible. A rat's turned into a spirit."

When Monkey heard this he used another trick, blocking the doorway and yelling at the top of his voice,

"That woman's talking nonsense, Wang the Second. Ignore her. I'm not a rat turned spirit. As a decent man I don't do underhanded things. I'm the Great Sage Equaling Heaven come down to earth to protect the Tang Priest while he goes to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. I've come to borrow these clothes as a disguise for my master because your king is so wicked. I'll bring them back soon when we're out of the city."

Once Wang the Second heard this he scrambled out of bed and started groping around the floor in the dark.

He was in such a rush that when he got hold of his trousers he thought they were his shirt: there was no way he could put them on no matter how he tried.

By now the Great Sage had used lifting magic to escape on his cloud, which he turned round to go straight back to the hollow by the road. Sanzang was looking out for him fixedly by the bright light of the moon and the stars, and as soon as he saw Monkey approaching he called out, "Can we get through the capital of Dharmadestructia, disciple?"

Coming up and laying the clothes down in front of him, Monkey replied, "Master, you won't get through Dharmadestructia as a monk."

"Brother," said Pig, "who do you think you're making things hard for? It's easy to stop being a monk. All you have to do is stop shaving your head for six months and let your hair grow."

"We can't wait six months," Monkey replied. "We're going to turn into laymen right now."

"But that's a completely ridiculous thing to say," said a shocked Pig. "We're all monks now, and if we turned into laymen straight away we wouldn't be able to wear hats. Even if we could pull them tight enough at the edges we've got no hair to tie the string at the top to."

"Stop fooling about," Sanzang shouted, "and be serious. What do you really have in mind?"

"I've had a good look at this city, Master," Monkey replied, "and although the king is a wicked one who kills monks he is a true son of heaven. There is an auspicious glow and a happy atmosphere above the city. I know my way round the streets now, and I can understand and talk the local language. I've just borrowed these hats and clothes from an inn for us to dress ourselves up as laymen in. We'll go into the city, put up for the night, get up at the fourth watch and ask the innkeeper to fix us some vegetarian food. At the fifth watch we'll go out through the gate and head West along the main road. If we meet anyone who tries to stop us we can talk our way out of it. I'll tell him we were sent by the ruler of their suzerain state. The king of Dharmadestructia won't dare hold us up. He'll let us go on our way."

"Our big brother has arranged things very well," said Friar Sand. "Let's do as he suggests."

The venerable elder did indeed have no option but to take off his

monastic tunic and hat and put on a layman's clothing and headwear. Friar Sand changed too, but Pig's head was too big for him to be able to wear a hat.

Monkey fetched needle and thread, tore two hats open and sewed them into a single one. Then he put the hat on Pig's head and found a garment big enough for him to wear. Finally he dressed himself and said,

"Gentlemen, we must ban the words 'master' and 'disciples' on this journey."

Chapter 84

1176

Journey to the West

"What else can we call each other?" Pig asked. "We must talk like people who address each other as brothers,"

Monkey replied. "The master can call himself Tang the Eldest. You can be Hogg the Third, and Friar Sand can be Sand the Fourth. I'll be Sun the Second. But when we are in the inn none of you must say anything.

Leave all the talking to me. When they ask what line of business we're in I'll say we're horse dealers. I'll pretend that the white horse is a sample and that there are ten of us altogether, of whom we four have come ahead to book rooms at an inn and sell this horse. The innkeeper will be bound to treat us well then. We'll be properly looked after, and before we leave I'll find a piece of broken tile and turn it into silver to pay him with. Then we'll be able to go on our way." Although he was not happy about it the Tang Priest had to go along with this.

The four of them hurried to the city, leading the horse and carrying the luggage. As this was a very peaceful place the city gates were still open although it was already night. They went straight into the city, and as they passed the gateway of Wang the Second's inn they could hear shouting inside.

People were yelling, "My hat's disappeared!" and "My clothes have gone!" Pretending he did not know what this was all about, Monkey took them to an inn further along on the other side of the road. This inn was still showing its lantern, so Monkey went up to the gateway and called, "Do you have a vacant room for us, innkeeper?"

"Yes, yes," a woman answered from inside. "Please come upstairs, gentlemen." Before she had finished speaking a man came out to take the horse. Monkey handed him the horse to take inside. He then led the master into the building in the shadow of the lamp. Upstairs there were tables and chairs conveniently arranged, and when the window was opened they all sat down in the clear moonlight.

When someone came with a lighted lamp Monkey blocked the doorway, blew it out and said, "No need for a lamp on a bright night like this."

No sooner had the man with the lamp gone down than a maid came up with four bowls of tea. Monkey took the bowls from her, only for her to be followed by a woman who looked to be about fifty – six or fifty – seven coming up the stairs.

Standing beside Monkey she asked, "Where are you gentlemen from? What fine goods do you have?"

"We're from the North," Monkey replied, "and we've got a few poor horses to sell."

"You're very young to be a horse dealer," the woman said.

"This gentleman is Tang the Eldest," Monkey explained, "this is Hogg the Third, and this is Sand the fourth.

I'm Sun the Second, an apprentice."

"But your surnames are all different," said the woman with a smile. "Yes," Monkey replied, "our surnames are different but we all live together. There are ten of us brothers altogether, and we four have come ahead to fix our board and lodging. The other six have found a place outside the city to stay tonight. It would have been awkward for them to come into the city as they've got a herd of horses. They'll come in tomorrow morning when we've fixed some accommodation. We won't go home till we've sold the horses."

"How many horses are there in your herd?" the woman asked.

"Over a hundred of all ages," Monkey replied. "They're all like that one of ours, except that they come in different colours."

"Mr. Sun," the woman said with a laugh, "you really know how to travel. You should have come straight here: no other inn would be able to put you up. We have a big courtyard well supplied with troughs and tethering posts and plenty of fodder too. We could feed several hundred horses here. There's just one thing I should mention. I've been keeping this inn for many years and it's quite well known. My late husband was called Zhao, but I'm afraid he died long ago, so this is now called Widow Zhao's Inn. We have three classes of entertainment for our guests. Let's get sordid money matters out of the way, then we can be more civilized later. The first thing is to discuss the tariffs and agree on one so that we know where we stand when it's time to settle the accounts."

"Quite right," Monkey replied. "What are your three classes of entertainment? As the saying goes, Your tariffs may be low, your tariffs may be dear,

But treat us all the same, who come from far or near.

What do your tariffs involve? Could you explain them to me?"

"We have first, second and third – class tariffs," the old woman replied. "The first class is a banquet with five kinds of fruit and five different dishes. The tables are set with confectionery lions and immortals fighting.

Two gentlemen share a table, and there are young ladies to sing to them and sleep with them. It costs half an ounce of silver per head, the price of the room included."

"I'd agree to that," Monkey replied. "Where we come from half an ounce wouldn't even pay for a girl."

"For the second – class tariff," the woman continued, "you all eat from the same dishes of food and we provide fruit and warm wine that you help yourselves to in your drinking games. No young ladies are provided and it costs one fifth of an ounce of silver each."

"I'd agree to that too," Monkey replied. "What about the third class?"

"I wouldn't like to discuss it with such distinguished gentlemen as yourselves," she replied.

"No harm in telling us about it," Monkey replied, "so that we can

choose what suits us best."

"Nobody waits on you in the third class," she said, "and we provide a big pot of rice for you to eat from as you will. When you're full there's straw for you to spread out on the ground and sleep on where it suits you. At dawn you give us a few coppers for the rice and I can assure you we won't argue about how much."

"We're in luck," said Pig, "we're in luck. That's the sort of deal I like. I'll eat my fill from the cauldron then have a bloody good sleep in front of the stove."

"What nonsense, brother," said Monkey. "We've earned an ounce or two of silver on our travels. Give us the first – class treatment."

"Make some good tea," the woman said with great delight, "and tell the kitchen to get the food ready quickly."

She then went downstairs calling out, "Kill chickens and geese and boil up some pickled meat for them to have with their rice."

Chapter 84

1178

Journey to the West

Then she shouted, "Kill a pig and a sheep. What can't be eaten today can be served tomorrow. Get some good wine. Use the best white rice, and make some pancakes with white flour."

When Sanzang heard all this from upstairs he said, "Whatever shall we do, Sun the Second? They're going to slaughter chickens, geese, a pig and a sheep. If they bring us all these we won't be able to eat them as we're all vegetarians."

"I've got an idea," said Monkey, and he stamped in the doorway and called out, "Mrs. Zhao, come up here."

"What instructions do you have for me, sir," she asked.

"Don't kill any living creatures today. We're eating vegetarian food today," Monkey replied.

"Are you gentlemen permanent vegetarians, or just vegetarians for this month?" asked the woman in surprise.

"Neither," replied Monkey. "We're vegetarians on *gengshen* days. Today's one, so we have to eat meatless food. But after the third watch tonight it'll be a *xinyou* day and the restrictions won't apply. Kill them tomorrow. Lay on some vegetarian food today, and make it first – class."

This made the woman happier than ever. "Don't slaughter anything," she said, hurrying downstairs, "don't slaughter anything. Fetch some tree – ear fungus, Fujian bamboo shoots, beancurd and wheat gluten. Pick some green vegetables in the garden, make vermicelli soup, steam some brad rolls, boil more white rice and make some scented tea."

Now the cooks were experts because they cooked every day, so that everything was ready in an instant to be set out upstairs. They also had some confectioneries of lions and immortals that were already made for the four travelers to eat their fill of.

When the question was asked, "Would you like some mild wine?" Brother Monkey replied, "Eldest Brother Tang won't have any, but the rest of us will have a few cups." The widow then fetched a jug of warm wine.

When drinks had been poured out for the three of them they heard the sound of banging against wooden boards. "Has some furniture fallen over downstairs, missus?" Monkey asked.

"No," the woman replied, "It's some retainers from my farm who arrived late this evening with rent rice. We let them sleep downstairs. As we were short – staffed when you gentlemen arrived I told them to take the sedan – chairs to the brothel to fetch some young ladies to keep you company. They must have hit the underneath of the floorboards with the chair – poles."

"You mentioned that before," Monkey said. "But don't send for them now. Today's a fast day, and besides, our brothers aren't here yet. They'll be here tomorrow for sure. Then we can all send for some call

– girls and have a good time in your excellent establishment before we sell our horses and go."

"What good men," the woman said, "what good men. That way you'll all stay friends and you won't waste your energy." Then she ordered that the sedan – chairs be brought back in as the whores were not to be fetched.

The four of them finished their wine and food, the utensils were cleared away, and the meal was over.

"Where are we going to sleep?" Sanzang whispered in Monkey's ear.

"Upstairs," Monkey replied.

Chapter 84

1179

Journey to the West

"Too dangerous," Sanzang replied. "We have all had so hard a journey that we may well fall fast asleep. If any of the inn people come in to tidy up and our hats have rolled off they will see our bald heads, realize that we are monks, and raise a hue and cry. That would be a disaster."

"You're right," said Monkey, going out to stamp his foot again.

"What instructions do you have this time, Mr. Sun?" the woman asked, coming upstairs once more.

"Where are we to sleep?" Monkey asked.

"Upstairs is best," she replied. "There are no mosquitoes and there's a South wind. Open the windows wide and you'll sleep beautifully."

"We won't be able to," said Monkey. "Our Mr. Hogg the Third has a touch of gout, Mr. Sand the Fourth has some rheumatism in his shoulder, Brother Tang can only sleep in the dark, and I don't like the light myself. So this is no place for us to sleep."

As the woman went downstairs, leaning on the banisters and sighing, her daughter, who was carrying a child in her arms, came up to her and said, "Mother, as the saying goes, 'Be stuck on a sandbank for ten days, then said past nine sandbanks in one.' It's too hot now to be doing much business, but once autumn begins we'll have more than

we can handle. What are you sighing like that for?"

"It's not because business is slack, daughter," the older woman replied. "I was just going to close the inn up this evening when four horse dealers came and took a room. They wanted the first – class tariff. I was hoping to make a little silver out of them, and I'm sighing because we won't earn much: they're fasting."

"As they've already eaten they can't very well go to another inn," the daughter replied. "And we'll be able to make money out of them when we serve them meat and wine tomorrow."

"They're all poorly," the older woman replied, "and want somewhere dark to sleep because they don't like drafts or light. All the rooms in the inn have got missing tiles, so where am I going to find somewhere dark for them? It'd be best to write off the cost of the meal and tell them to stay somewhere else."

"But we do have somewhere dark in the house, mother," her daughter replied, "where there's no draft and no light. It'll do splendidly."

"Where?" the older woman asked.

"The big trunk that father had made when he was still alive," the daughter replied. "It's four feet wide, seven feet long and three feet high, and big enough for seven people to sleep in. Tell them to sleep in the trunk."

"I don't know whether it'll do," said the older woman. "I'll ask them. Mr. Sun, if you won't have our poky little room there's nowhere darker here than our big trunk. It'll keep out light and drafts. So why don't you sleep in the trunk?"

"Splendid," Monkey replied. She then told several of the retainers to carry the trunk out and open the lid, while inviting her guests to come downstairs. Monkey led the master and Friar Sand carried the luggage as they went to the trunk, following in the lantern's shadow. The reckless Pig was the first to climb inside. Friar Sand lifted the luggage in then helped the Tang Priest in before getting in himself.

"Where's our horse?" Monkey asked.

"Tied up eating hay in the stables at the back," replied the servant who was attending them.

"Bring it here," said Monkey, "and bring the trough too. Tether the animal next to the trunk." Only then did he get inside himself and call out, "Shut the lid, Mrs. Zhao, fasten the hasp and padlock it. And look it over for us. Glue paper wherever it lets in the light. Open it again early tomorrow morning."

"You're very particular," the widow said. After that the doors were fastened and everyone went to bed.

The story switches to the four of them in the chest. Poor things! They were wearing hats, the weather was very hot and it was airless and stuffy. They took off their hats and clothes, and fanned themselves with their monastic hats for lack of fans. They were all crowded in next to each other and did not fall asleep till the second watch. Monkey, however, wanted to make trouble, so he stayed awake. He put his hand out and gave Pig a pinch on the leg.

The idiot pulled his leg in and mumbled, "Go to sleep. We've had a hard day. What do you want to fool around pinching people's hands and feet for?"

"We started by laying out five thousand ounces of silver," said Monkey aloud, deliberately making mischief,

"and we sold those horses the other day for three thousand. We've got four thousand in the two bags, and we'll sell this herd of horses for another three thousand. That means we'll have doubled our capital. That's not bad."

Pig, who was sleepy, did not bother to reply.

Now the floor staff, the water–carriers and the kitchen porters were in league with bandits. After hearing Brother Monkey talking about all the money they had, several of them slipped off to fetch twenty or more armed bandits to come with torches to rob the four horse traders. As they charger in through the gates they gave Widow Zhao and her daughter such a fright that shivering and shaking they fastened the doors of their room and let the robbers take whatever they wanted outside. Now the bandits were not after the inn's property but were looking for the guests. When they went upstairs and found no sign of them there, they lit their torches and held them out

while they looked all around. All they could see was a large trunk in the courtyard, to the bottom of which was tethered a white horse. The lid was tightly locked and could not be prized open.

"Travelling merchants all know what they're about," the bandits said. "This trunk looks so strong that it's bound to be full of purses, valuables and silk. Let's steal the horse, take the trunk out of town, open it up and share out what's inside. That would be the best thing, wouldn't it?" The bandits then found some rope with which they lifted the box and carried it off, swinging and swaying.

"Brother," said Pig, woken up by this, "go to sleep. Why are you rocking us?"

"Shut up," Monkey replied. "Nobody's rocking us."

Sanzang and Friar Sand had been abruptly awoken too, and they asked, "Who's carrying us?"

"Keep quiet," said Monkey, "keep quiet. Let them carry us. If they carry us to the Western Heaven we'll be saved the trouble of walking."

But the successful bandits were not heading West. Instead they headed towards the East of the city, killing the soldiers on the city gate, opening it and letting themselves out. This caused a sensation in the streets and the markets, where the watchmen of all the shops reported it to the commander – in – chief of the city garrison and the East city commissioner. As this was their responsibility the commander – in – chief and the East city Chapter 84

commissioner mustered a force of infantry, cavalry and bowmen that left the city in pursuit of the bandits.

Seeing that resistance to so powerful a government force would have been pointless, the bandits abandoned the trunk and the white horse, scattered into the undergrowth and disappeared. The government troops did not catch even half a robber: all they captured was the trunk and the white horse, with which they returned in triumph. The commander – in – chief examined the horse in the light of the lamps and saw that it was a fine one: Threads of silver grew in his mane;

In his tail hung strands of jade.

Forget about Eight Chargers and dragon steeds;

This was steadier than the great Sushuang;

Its bones alone would have sold for a thousand ounces of silver; It could gallop after the wind for three thousand miles.

When it climbed a mountain it merged into the clouds;

As it neighed at the moon it was as white as snow.

It was truly a dragon from an ocean island,

A unicorn of Jade in the human world.

The commander—in—chief rode the white horse instead of his own steed as he led his men back into the city.

The trunk was carried to his headquarters, where he and the East city commissioner sealed it with strips of paper on which they wrote and set a guard over it till morning, when they would submit a memorial to the king and request a decision on what to do with it. After that the other troops were dismissed.

The story now tells how the venerable Tang Priest was grumbling at Monkey inside the chest. "Ape," he said,

"you've killed me this time. If I had been arrested outside and taken to the king of Dharmadestructia I might well have been able to put up a good argument in my defense. But now I am here, locked in this trunk. I have been carried off by bandits and recaptured by the army. When we are shown to the king tomorrow we will be all ready for him to put to the sword and make up his ten thousand."

"There are people outside!" exclaimed Monkey. "If they open the trunk and take you out you'll either be tied up or hung up. If you don't want to be tied or strung up you'd better show a little patience. When we're taken to see this deluded king tomorrow I'll definitely be able to talk my way out of things. I guarantee that not one hair of yours will be harmed. So stop worrying and go back to sleep."

In the third watch Monkey used one of his magic powers. Slipping his cudgel out he blew on it with a magic breath, called "Change!" and turned it into a triple auger with which he drilled two or three holes near the bottom of the chest, forming a single larger hole. He put the auger away, shook himself, turned into an ant and

crawled out. Then he turned back into himself and rode his cloud straight to the palace gates. The king was fast asleep at the time, so Monkey used his Great All powerful Body – dividing Magic.

Plucking all the hairs out of his left arm he blew on them with a magic breath, called "Change!" and turned them into little Monkeys. Then he pulled all the hairs out from his right arm, blew on them with a magic breath, called "Change!" and turned them into sleep – insects. Next he recited the magic word *Om* and told the local deity of the place to take the little Monkeys to distribute them throughout the palace to all the officials in every office and department of government. Each holder of official rank was given a sleep – insect to ensure that he or she would sleep soundly and not get up. Monkey then took his gold – banded cudgel in his hands, squeezed it, waved it, called, "Change, treasure!" and turned it into over a thousand razors of the sort used for shaving the head. Taking one himself, he told all the little monkeys to take one each and shave the heads of everyone in the inner quarters of the palace and in all the government departments and offices. This was indeed a case of:

When the Dharma king would destroy it the Dharma is infinite;

The Dharma runs through heaven and earth, opening the Great Way.

The origins of ten thousand Dharmas all come down to one;

The features of the Three Vehicles are basically the same.

He bored through the trunk to find out the news,

Distributed his golden hairs to smash delusion,

Determined to bring the Dharma king to the true achievement,

To the eternal emptiness of what is not born and dies not.

That night the head – shaving was completed, so Monkey said another spell to dismiss the local deity, shook himself to bring all the hairs back to his arms, then touched all the razors to turn them back into their true form as the gold – banded cudgel, which he made much smaller and hid in his ear again. Finally he reverted to being an ant, crawled back into the trunk, and went on guarding the Tang Priest in

his time of danger.

When the palace ladies in the inner quarters got up to wash and do their hair before dawn the next morning they all found that their hair had gone. The same had happened to all the eunuchs, senior and junior, who moved around the palace. They all crowded to the outside of the royal bedchamber, where they played music to wake the king up, all holding back their tears but not daring to speak. Before long the queen in the palace woke up to find her hair gone too. When she hurried with lanterns to the dragon bed she found a monk sleeping in the brocade quilt, at which she could restrain her tongue no longer, thus awakening the king.

When the king suddenly opened his eyes wide and saw the queen's bald head he got straight out of bed and said, "Why are you like that, my queen?"

"You're the same, Your Majesty," she replied. The king then rubbed his head, which gave him such a fright that the three souls in his body groaned, and his seven spirits flew off into the air.

Chapter 84

1183

Journey to the West

"What has happened to me?" he exclaimed.

Just when he was in this panicky state the royal consorts, the palace ladies and the eunuchs young and old all fell to their knees, their heads shaved bald, and said, "Lord, we have all been turned into monks."

At the sight of them the king wept. "We think this must be because of all the monks we have killed," he said.

He then gave these orders: "None of you are to say anything about the loss of our hair as, if you do, the civil and military officials may slander our country and say that it has been badly governed. Let us now hold court in the throne hall."

Now all the officials high and low in all the departments and offices of government went to court to pay their respects before dawn. As it turned out, all these men had lost their hair in the night too, and they all submitted memorials reporting the fact. All that could be heard

was:

The whip of silence sounding three times at the royal audience; As all report that their heads have now been shaved.

If you do not know what happened to the booty in the trunk that the commander – in – chief had recaptured and whether the Tang Priest and his three disciples were to live or die, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 85

The Mind – ape is jealous of the Mother of Wood

The Demon Chief Plots to Devour the Master of Dhyana

The story tells how when the king held his dawn audience the civil and military officials all carried memorials. "Sovereign Lord," they reported, "we beg you to forgive your servants for their lack of decorum."

"Gentlemen," the king replied, "you are all as courteous as ever. What lack of decorum are you showing?"

"Sovereign Lord," they said, "we do not know why, but all of your servants lost their hair last night." Holding in his hand these memorials about the lost hair, the king descended from his dragon throne to say to the officials, "Indeed, we do not know why either, but everyone in the palace, young and old, lost their hair last night."

King and ministers alike all wept as they said, "From now on we will not dare kill any more monks." The king then returned to his throne and the officials took their places in their proper ranks. The king then said, "Let those with business here come forward from their ranks to report. If there is no other business the curtain may be rolled up and the audience ended."

The commander – in – chief of the capital's garrison then moved forward from the ranks of military officials and the East city commissioner moved forward from the ranks of the civil officials to kowtow at the steps of the throne and report, "We were patrolling the city on Your Majesty's orders last night when we recaptured a Chapter 85

trunk of bandits' booty and a white horse. As we do not dare take unauthorized action over these we beg Your Majesty to issue an edict." The king was delighted.

"Bring it here, trunk and all," he ordered.

The two officials then returned to their own offices, mustered a full complement of soldiers and had the trunk carried out. Sanzang, who was inside, felt his soul leaving his body. "Disciples," he said, "what shall we say in our defense when we reach the king?"

"Shut up," said Monkey with a grin. "I've fixed everything. When the trunk's opened the king will bow to us as his teachers. The only thing is that Pig mustn't quarrel about precedence."

"If they don't kill me that'll be heaven," Pig replied. "What would I want to quarrel about?" Before these words were all out of his mouth they had been carried to the palace entrance and in through the Tower of Five Phoenixes to be set at the foot of the steps to the throne.

On being invited by the two officials to have the trunk opened and look inside the king ordered that this be done. No sooner was the lid lifted than Pig, who could restrain himself no longer, sprang outside, giving all the officials such a fright that they shivered, unable to speak. Next Brother Monkey could be seen helping the Tang Priest out, while Friar Sand lifted the luggage out.

Seeing that the commander—in—chief was holding the white horse, Pig went up to him, made an angry noise and said, "That's my horse. Hand it over!" This so terrified the official that he collapsed head over heels.

The four pilgrims all stood upright in the middle of the steps, and when the king saw that they were monks he came down at once from his dragon throne, sent for his queen and consorts from the inner quarters, descended the steps of the throne hall, bowed to them along with all his officials and asked, "What brings you venerable gentlemen here?"

"I have been sent by His Majesty the Great Tang Emperor to go to the Great Thunder Monastery in India in the West to worship the living Buddha and fetch the true scriptures," Sanzang replied.

"Venerable Master," the king said, "you have come from far away. But why did you sleep in this trunk last night?"

"I knew that Your Majesty had sworn a vow to kill Buddhist monks," Sanzang replied, "which is why I did not dare to visit your illustrious country openly, but disguised myself as a layman to arrive late at night to find lodging in one of your inns. We slept in the trunk because we were afraid that our real identity would be d i s c o v e r e d . U n f o r t u n a t e l y t h e t r u n k w a s s t o l e n b y b a n d i t s , t h e n b r o u g h t b a c k h e r e b y t h e commander – in – chief. Now that I have been able to see Your Majesty's dragon countenance, the clouds have cleared away and the sun has come out. I hope that Your Majesty will pardon and release me, ascetic monk that I am: my gratitude will be as deep as the ocean."

"Venerable Master," the king replied, "you are a distinguished monk from our suzerain heavenly dynasty. It was wrong of us not to go out to welcome you. For years we have been fulfilling a vow to kill monks because a monk once maligned us. The vow we made to heaven was to kill ten thousand monks to make up a round number. We never imagined that today we would return to the truth and that we would all be turned into monks. Now all of us, king, officials, queen and consorts, have had our hair shaved off. I beg, Venerable Master, that you will not be grudging with your lofty virtue and will take us as your disciples."

Chapter 85

1185

Journey to the West

When Pig heard this he started roaring with laughter: "If you're going to be our disciples what introductory presents have you got for us?"

"If you will accept us as your follower, Master," the king replied, "we will present you with all the wealth in our kingdom."

"Don't talk about wealth to us," said Brother Monkey, "as we're proper monks. As long as you inspect and return our passport and escort us out of the city I can guarantee that your monarchy will last for ever and that you will enjoy a long and happy life." On hearing this the king ordered his office of foreign relations to arrange a great feast at which monarch and officials together returned to the one truth. The passport was immediately inspected and returned, after which Sanzang was asked to change the name of the country.

"'Dharma' in the name of Your Majesty's country is excellent," Monkey said, "but the 'destructia' part is nonsense. Now that we've come here you should change the name to 'Dharmarespectia'. This would guarantee Clear waters and victory for a thousand generations;

Timely winds and rain with universal peace."

The king thanked them for their gracious kindness, had the royal carriage prepared and escorted the Tang Priest and his three disciples Westwards out of the city.

We will say no more of how monarch and subjects now held to the true faith, but tell how after leaving the king of Dharmarespectia the venerable elder said happily from on his horse, "What excellent magic you used, Wukong. It worked very well."

"Elder brother," said Friar Sand, "where did you find so many barbers to shave all those heads in one night?"

Monkey then told them all about how he had used his miraculous powers, at which they all laughed so much they could not stop.

Just as they were feeling so cheerful a great mountain came into view, blocking their way. Reining in the horse, the Tang Priest said, "Disciples, see how high that mountain is. You must be very careful."

"Don't worry," said Monkey with a grin, "don't worry. I promise you nothing will go wrong."

"Don't say that," Sanzang replied. "I can see those jutting peaks, and even from a distance it looks rather sinister. Storm clouds are streaming from it, and I am beginning to feel frightened. My whole body is turning numb and my spirits are disturbed."

"You have already forgotten the *Heart Sutra* that the Rook's Nest Hermit taught you," said Brother Monkey.

"I can still remember it," Sanzang said.

"Even if you can still remember that," said Monkey, "there is a quatrain that you've forgotten."

"What quatrain?" Sanzang asked, to which Monkey replied, Chapter 85

"Do not go far to seek the Buddha on Vulture Peak;

Vulture Peak is in your heart.

Everybody has a Vulture Peak stupa

Under which to cultivate conduct."

"Of course I know it, disciple," said Sanzang. "According to that quatrain the thousands of scriptures all come down to cultivating the heart."

"Goes without saying," Monkey replied.

"When the heart is purified it can shine alone;

When the heart is preserved all perceptions are pure.

If there is any mistake then laziness follows,

And success will not come in a myriad years.

As long as your will is sincere Thunder Peak is before your eyes.

But if you're as scared, frightened and disturbed as this the Great Way is distant, and Thunder Peak is far, far away. Forget those wild fears and come with me." When the venerable elder heard this his spirits were revived and his worries disappeared.

The four of them had only gone a few more steps when they reached the mountain. When they raised their eyes this was what they saw:

A fine mountain,

Dappled with many colours.

White clouds drifted around the peak,

And cool were the shadows of the trees in front of the cliff.

The birds rustled in the leaves,

The beasts were ferocious.

Journey to the West

Among the woods were a thousand pines,

On the ridge a few bamboos.

Howls came from gray wolves seizing their prey,

And roars from hungry tigers fighting over food.

Long screamed the wild apes searching for fruit;

The David's – deer climbed through blossoms into mists of green.

The wind was blowing,

The waters babbled,

And hidden birds sang in the deserted pass.

Here and there wisteria was climbing

While rare flowers bloomed by the stream amid orchids.

Intricately shaped and strange were the rocks,

And sheer rose the crags.

Foxes and raccoon – dogs ran in packs;

Badgers and apes were playing in groups.

The travelers were worried by so high and steep a mountain:

Why was the ancient track so twisted?

While master and disciples were moving timidly ahead they heard the howling of a wind. "There's a wind,"

said Sanzang in fear.

"In the spring there are mild winds," Monkey replied, "in the summer hot ones, in the autumn golden ones and in the winter North winds. There are winds in all four seasons. What's so frightening about a wind?"

"This wind is blowing very hard," Sanzang replied. "It is definitely not a wind from heaven."

"But winds always come from the earth and clouds from mountains," Monkey replied, "so how could there be a wind from heaven?" Before he had finished speaking a mist arose. That mist really was Darkness joining up with the sky,

Chapter 85

1188

Journey to the West

Obscurity making the whole earth dim.

The sun had completely vanished from sight

And no bird sang.

All was as indistinct as primal chaos,

And the air seemed filled with flying dust.

The trees on the mountain could not be seen

Where had the herb－gatherers gone?

"Wukong," said Sanzang in fright, "why is there this mist when the wind is still blowing?"

"Don't get upset," Monkey replied. "Get off your horse, Master. I'll go and see whether or not it's sinister while you two keep guard, brothers."

The splendid Great Sage needed only to bow in order to be in mid－air. Holding his hand to his brow for shade, he opened his fiery eyes wide and looked down to see an evil spirit sitting at the foot of a beetling scar.

Just look and see what he was like:

A mighty body full of charm,

A heroic manner of great vigor.

The fangs protruding from his mouth were drills of steel;

His nose hung like a jade hook in the middle.

His golden eyes with pupils round gave animals a fright;

Demons and gods were scared of his bristling silver whiskers.

He sat upright by the cliff in terrible might,

Making the mist and wind as he hatched his plot.

On either side of him some thirty or forty junior demons could be seen, all drawn up in line and blowing out mist and wind for all they were worth. Monkey grinned at this and thought, "So my master is clairvoyant. He said it wasn't a heavenly wind, and it was in fact caused by this evil spirit trying to fool us. Now if I went straight down and hit him with what they call a 'garlicsmasher' that'd kill him sure enough, but it would ruin my reputation." Monkey had been a true hero all his life and was quite incapable of playing a dirty trick like that.

Chapter 85

1189

Journey to the West

"I'd better go back and give Pig some attention. I'll ask him to hit the evil spirit first. If Pig's good enough to kill the evil spirit we'll be in luck. If he isn't and the evil spirit captures him I can come back to rescue him and win myself a bit of fame. He's always putting on such an act and being so lazy— —he won't make an effort.

Still, he is very greedy and partial to a good feed. I think I'll try a trick on him and see how that works."

At once he brought his cloud down to land in front of Sanzang, who asked, "Are the wind and the mist sinister or not?"

"It's clear now," Monkey replied. "They've gone."

"Yes," said Sanzang, "they have eased off a little."

"Master," said Monkey with a smile, "my eyesight is very good usually, but this time I was wrong. I thought there'd probably be a monster behind that wind and mist but there wasn't."

"What caused them then?" Sanzang asked.

"There's a village not far ahead," Monkey replied, "where the people

are so pious that they're steaming white rice and white breadrolls to feed monks with. I think that the mist must have been steam escaping from their steamers. It was the result of their goodness."

When Pig heard this he thought Monkey was telling the truth, so he grabbed hold of him and whispered, "Did you eat their food before you came back?"

"Only a bit," Monkey replied. "The vegetable dishes were too salty——I didn't want to eat too much."

"Screw that," said Pig. "I'd eat my fill of it however salty it was. If it made me really thirsty I'd come back for a drink of water."

"Would you like some?" Monkey asked.

"Sure thing," Pig replied. "I'm hungry and I'd like some now. What do you think?"

"You mustn't even talk about it," said Monkey. "As the ancient book says, 'When the father is present the son must do nothing on his own account.' Our master, who's as good as a father to you, is here, so none of us should dare go ahead."

"If you'll say nothing about it, I'm going," replied Pig with a grin.

"Let's see how you do it," Monkey replied. "I'll say nothing." When it came to eating the idiot knew a thing or two.

He went up to his master, made a loud "na—a—aw" of respect, and said, "Master, elder brother has just told me that there are people in a village ahead of us who feed monks. Just look at that horse. It looks as though it's going to start playing it up. We'll be causing a lot of trouble if we have to ask for grass and other fodder for it.

Luckily the wind and the clouds have gone now, so why don't you all sit here for a while while I fetch some tender grass? We can go and beg for food from that house when we've fed the horse."

"Splendid," said the Tang Priest with delight. "I wondered why you've become so hardworking today. Be as quick as you can."

Chapter 85

Smiling secretly to himself the idiot started out. "Brother," said Monkey, catching up and grabbing hold of him, "they feed monks all right, but only good—looking ones."

"In that case I'll have to change again," said Pig.

"Yes," said Brother Monkey, "you change."

The splendid idiot, who could perform thirty—six transformations, went into a hollow on the mountainside, made a spell with his hands, said the magic words, shook himself and turned himself into a short, skinny monk, beating a wooden fish—shaped dram with his hand and mumbling, "Oh great one, oh great one,"

because he knew no scriptures to recite.

After putting away the wind and the mist the evil spirit ordered all his devils to form a circle round the main road, ready for any travelers. The idiot's luck was out, and he was soon inside the trap and surrounded by the devils, who grabbed at his clothes and his silken sash as they all crowded in on him together.

"Don't pull," Pig said. "You can let me eat in all your houses in turn."

"What do you want to eat, monk?" the devils asked. "You feed monks here," Pig replied, "and I've come to be fed."

"So you're hoping to be fed, are you, monk?" said the demons. "You don't seem to realize that what we like doing best here is eating monks. We're all evil immortals who've found the Way here in the mountains, and the only thing we want to do is to catch you monks, take you home with us, pop you in the steamer till you're tender and eat you. And you're still hoping for a vegetarian meal!"

At this Pig's heart was filled with terror, and he started complaining about Monkey. "That Protector of the Horses is a crook. He lied to me about them feeding monks in this village. There aren't any villagers here and there's nobody who feeds monks. They're all evil spirits." The idiot was being tugged at so hard that he turned back into himself, pulled the rake out from his belt and struck out wildly, driving all the junior devils back.

They rushed back to report to the senior demon, "Disaster, Your Majesty."

"What disaster?" the senior demon asked.

"A neat–looking monk came along in front of the mountain," they replied, "so we decided to catch him and steam him. We were going to keep what we couldn't eat now for a bad day. Then to our astonishment he transformed himself."

"What did he turn himself into?" the senior demon asked.

"Not into anything human," they replied. "He's got a long snout, big ears, and a bristly mane on his back. He lashed out furiously at us with a rake that he used two–handed. He gave us such a terrible fright that we've run straight back to report to Your Majesty."

"Don't be afraid," the senior demon said. "Let me go and have a look." Swinging his iron mace he went up for a closer look and saw that the idiot really was hideous. This is what he looked like: Chapter 85

A snout like a husking hammer over three feet long;

Tusks like silver nails protruding from his mouth.

Two round eyes that flashed like lightning;

A pair of ears that made a howling wind when they flapped.

The bristles behind his head were rows of iron arrows;

All of his hide was rough and green and scabby.

In his hands he held an amazing object:

A nine–toothed rake of which everyone was afraid.

Summoning up his courage, the evil spirit shouted, "Where are you from? What's your name? Tell me at once and I'll spare your life."

To this Pig replied with a laugh, "So you can't recognize your own ancestor Pig either, my boy. Come closer and I'll tell you:

For my huge mouth and tusks and mighty powers

I was made Marshal Tian Peng by the Jade Emperor,

Commanding eighty thousand marines on the River of Heaven,

And happy amid all the joys of the heavenly palace.

Because when drunk I fluted with a palace lady

I decided to play the hero for a while.

One butt from my snout destroyed the Dipper and Bull Palace;

I ate the magic mushrooms of the Queen Mother of the West.

The Jade Emperor himself gave me two thousand hammer–blows,

Made me an exile from the world of Heaven.

This made me determined to nourish my spirit,

And become an evil monster in the lower world.

Just when I had made a good marriage in Gao Village

Chapter 85

1192

Journey to the West

Fate brought me up against my brother Monkey.

He subdued me with his gold–banded cudgel;

I was forced to bow my head and enter the Buddhist faith.

I do the heavy work, saddle the horse and carry luggage:

I must have been the Tang Priest's debtor in an earlier life.

As the iron–footed Marshal Tian Peng my surname was Zhu;

My name as a Buddhist is Zhu Bajie."

When the evil spirit heard this he shouted, "So you're the Tang Priest's disciple. I've long heard that his flesh is very tasty. You're one of the people I most want to catch. I'm not going to spare you now you've fallen into my clutches. Stay where you are, and take this from my mace."

"Evil beast," Pig replied. "You must have been a dyer before."

"What do you mean, I must have been a dyer?" the evil spirit asked.

"If you weren't a dyer, how come you know how to use a pestle?" Pig retorted, and with no further argument the monster was upon him, striking furiously. They fought a fine battle in the mountain hollow: A nine–toothed rake,

An iron mace.

As the rake went through its movements they were like a howling gale; The mace's skilful blows came as thick and fast as rain.

One was an unknown ogre blocking the mountain road;

The other was the offending Tian Peng now guarding his true nature's master.

When one's nature is right monsters cause no fear;

When the mountain is high earth cannot come from metal.

One fought with his mace like a python from a pool;

The other's rake was like a dragon from the waters.

Their angry shouts shook mountains and rivers;

Their mighty roars caused terror down in hell.

Each of the heroes displayed his prowess,

Staking his life on his magical powers.

We will say no more of how Pig set a mighty wind blowing as he fought the evil spirit, who ordered his junior devils to keep Pig surrounded. Instead the story tells how Brother Monkey suddenly gave a bitter laugh behind the Tang Priest's back.

"Why are you laughing like that, elder brother?" Friar Sand asked.

"Pig really is an idiot," Monkey replied. "As soon as he heard that they

feed monks there he fell for my trick.

He's been away a long time now. If he'd beaten the evil spirit with a single blow of his rake you'd have seen him coming back in triumph by now, loudly insisting on his great victory. But if the demon's been too much for him and captured him my luck's out. Goodness only knows how often he'll have cursed the Protector of the Horses behind my back. Say nothing while I go to take a look around, Wujing."

With that the splendid Great Sage, who did not want the venerable elder to know what was happening, quietly pulled a hair out of the back of his head, blew on it with magic breath, said "Change!" and turned it into his own double to stay with the master together with Friar Sand. Then his real self disappeared as he leapt up into the air to look around. He saw the idiot lashing out wildly with his rake at the devils who were surrounding him and gradually getting the better of him.

This was more than Monkey could bear. Bringing his cloud down to land, he shouted at the top of his voice,

"Take it easy, Pig. Monkey's here." Recognizing that it was Monkey's voice gave the idiot a chance to be more ferocious than ever as he hit wildly forward with his rake. The evil spirit was no match for him.

"You weren't up to much before, monk," he said, "so how come you're so fierce now?"

"You'd better stop bullying me now, my lad," Pig replied. "I've got one of my people here now." A moment later he was swinging wildly again with the rake. The evil spirit, unable to stave off the blows, led his devils away in defeat. As soon as Monkey saw that the devils had been beaten he drew no closer but went straight back on his cloud, shook the hair and put it back on his body. With his mortal, fleshly eyes the Tang Priest noticed nothing of this.

Before long a triumphant Pig returned too, so exhausted that his nose was dripping with snot as he foamed at the mouth and was panting loudly. "Master!" he called.

When the Tang Priest saw him he exclaimed in astonishment, "Pig, you went to fetch some grass for the horse. Why have you come back in so terrible a state? Were there watchmen on the mountain who wouldn't let you cut any?"

The idiot flung his rake down, beat his chest and stamped his feet as

he replied, "Don't ask me about it, Master. If I had to tell you I'd die of shame."

"What would you be so ashamed of?" Sanzang asked.

"Elder brother tricked me," Pig replied. "He told me that it wasn't an evil spirit behind that wind and mist. He said there was nothing sinister about it, but that it was from a village where the people were so pious that they were steaming white rice and breadrolls made with white flour to feed monks with. I believed him. As I was so hungry I thought I'd go ahead to beg for some. Fetching grass for the horse was only an excuse. I never expected to be surrounded by a crowd of evil spirits. They gave me a hard fight, and if Monkey hadn't helped me out with his mourner's staff I'd have had no hope of escaping and getting back here."

'The idiot's talking nonsense," said Monkey, who was standing beside them, with a smile. "If you've taken to robbery you're trying to get a whole gaolful of people into trouble. I've been looking after the master here. I've never left his side."

"It is true," Sanzang said, "Wukong has never left my side."

The idiot then sprang up shouting, "You don't understand, Master. He's got a double."

"Is there really a monster there, Wukong?" Sanzang asked. Monkey could keep his deception up no longer.

"There are a few little devils," Monkey replied with a bow and a smile, "but they won't dare give us any trouble. Come here, Pig. I'm going to look after you. We're going to escort the master along this steep mountain path as if we were an army on the march."

"How?" Pig asked.

"You'll be the commander of the vanguard," Monkey replied, "going in front and clearing the way. If the evil spirit doesn't show up again that will be that; but if he does, you fight him. When you beat the evil spirit that'll be something to your credit."

Reckoning that the evil spirit's powers were much the same as his own, Pig said, "Very well then. I'm ready to die at his hands. I'll take the lead."

"Idiot," said Monkey, "if you start by saying such unlucky things you'll never get anywhere."

"As you know, brother," Pig replied,

"When a gentleman goes to a banquet

He gets either drunk or well filled;

When a hero goes into a battle

He gets either wounded or killed.

By saying something unlucky first I'll make myself stronger later." This delighted Monkey, who saddled the horse and invited the master to ride while Friar Sand carried the luggage as they all followed Pig into the mountains.

Chapter 85

1195

Journey to the West

The evil spirit meanwhile led a few of his underlings who had survived the rout straight back to his cave, where he sat brooding in silence high up above a rocky precipice. Many of the junior devils who looked after things in his household came up to him and asked, "Why are you so miserable today, Your Majesty? You're usually in—such high spirits when you come back."

"Little ones," said the demon king, "usually when I go out to patrol the mountains I can be sure of bringing home a few people or animals I've caught to feed you with. Today my luck was out: I've met my match."

"Who?" the junior devils asked.

"A monk," the demon king replied, "a disciple of the Tang Priest from the East who's going to fetch the scriptures. He's called Zhu Bajie. He went for me so hard with his rake that he beat me. I had to run away. I'm thoroughly fed up. For ages now I've heard it said that the Tang Priest is an arhat who has cultivated his conduct for ten successive lifetimes. Anyone who eats a piece of his flesh will live for ever. To

my surprise he's come to my mountain today, and it would have been an ideal time to catch him, cook him and eat him. I never realized he'd have a disciple like that one."

Before he had finished saying this a junior devil slipped forward from the ranks. First he gave three sobs in front of the demon king, then three laughs.

"Why sob then laugh?" shouted the demon king.

The junior devil fell to his knees as he replied, "Because Your Majesty just said that you wanted to eat the Tang Priest. His flesh isn't worth eating."

"But everyone says that a piece of his flesh will make you live as long as the heavens," said the demon king.

"How can you say that it's not worth eating?"

"If he were so good to eat," the junior devil replied, "he'd never have got this far. Other demons would have eaten him up. And he's got three disciples with him."

"Do you know who?" the demon king asked.

"The senior disciple is Sun the Novice," said the junior devil, "and the third disciple is Friar Sand. The one you met must have been his second disciple Zhu Bajie."

"How does Friar Sand compare with Zhu Bajie?" asked the demon king.

"He's much the same," the junior devil said,

"What about Sun the Novice?" the demon king asked, at which the junior devil thrust out his tongue in horror and replied, "I daren't tell you. That Monkey has tremendous magic powers and can do all sorts of transformations. Five hundred years ago he made terrible havoc in heaven. None of the heavenly warriors dared give him any trouble, from the Twenty－eight Constellations, the Star Lords of the Nine Bright Shiners, the Gods of the Twelve Branches, the Five Officers and the Four Ministers, the East and West Dippers and the Gods of the North and the South, to the Five Peaks and the Four Rivers. How can you have the nerve to want to eat the Tang Priest?"

"How do you know so much about him?" the demon king asked.

"I used to live in the Lion Cave of the demon king on Lion Ridge," the junior devil replied. "He was reckless enough to want to eat the Tang Priest, and that Sun the Novice smashed his way in through the gates with his gold – banded cudgel. It was terrible. They were wiped out. Luckily I had enough sense to escape by the back door and come here, where Your Majesty allowed me to stay. That's how I know about his powers."

The senior demon turned pale with shock when he heard this: it was a case of the commander – in – chief being afraid of the soothsayer's words. How could he help being alarmed when he heard all this from one of his own people? Just when they were all feeling terrified another junior devil stepped forward and said, "Don't be so upset and afraid, Your Majesty. As the saying goes, easy does it. If you want to catch the Tang Priest let me make you a plan to capture him."

"What plan?" the senior demon asked.

"I have a plan to 'divide the petals of the plum blossom.'"

"What do you mean by 'dividing the petals of the plum blossom?'" the demon king asked.

"Call the roll of all the devils in the cave," the junior devil replied. "Choose the best hundred from all thousand of them, then the best ten out of that hundred, and finally the best three out of the ten. They must be capable and good at transformations. Have them all turn into Your Majesty's doubles, wear Your Majesty's helmet and armor, carry Your Majesty's mace, and lie in wait in three different places. First send one out to fight Zhu Bajie, then one to fight Sun the Novice and finally one to fight Friar Sand. This way you'll only have to spare three junior devils to draw the three disciples away. Then Your Majesty will be able to stretch down from mid – air with your cloud – grabbing hand to catch the Tang Priest. He'll be in the bag. It'll be as easy as catching flies in a dish of fish juice. Nothing to it."

This suggestion delighted the demon king, who said, "What a brilliant plan, brilliant! If I don't catch the Tang Priest this way, that'll be that. But if I do I can assure you you'll be richly rewarded. I'll make you commander of the vanguard." The junior devil kowtowed to thank him

for his grace and went off to call the roll of the devils. After all the monsters in the cave had been carefully checked through, three capable junior devils were selected. They turned into the senior devil's doubles and went to lie in wait for the Tang Priest with their iron maces.

The venerable Tang elder meanwhile was following Pig along the way without a care in the world. When they had been going for some time there was a crashing sound from beside the track and out leapt a junior devil who rushed straight at them, evidently to grab Sanzang. "The evil spirit's here, Pig," Monkey shouted. "Get him!"

The idiot, who was taken in by the imposture, hacked wildly at the devil with his rake. The evil spirit parried Pig's blows with his mace as he met the onslaught. While the battle between the pair of them ebbed and flowed on the mountainside there was a noise in the undergrowth as another monster sprang out and charged at the Tang Priest.

"This is bad, Master," said Monkey. "Pig can't see straight. He's let the monster escape to catch you. I'm going to fight him." Pulling his cudgel out in a flash, he went up to the monster, shouting, "Where d'you think you're going? Take this!"

Without saying a word the evil spirit raised his mace to meet the attack. But while the two of them were locked in combat, swinging at each other, there was a howling wind from the other side of the mountain and a Chapter 85

third evil spirit sprang out who also rushed straight at the Tang Priest. When Friar Sand saw it he exclaimed in alarm, "Master, big brother and second brother both can't see straight. They've let the evil spirit get away to catch you. Stay on the horse while I get him."

Friar Sand was taken in too. Brandishing his staff he blocked the evil spirit's iron mace and started a bitter combat. It was a wild fight with shouts and awful yells, and they drew further and further away. When the demon king saw from up in the sky that the Tang Priest was alone on the horse he reached down with his five–clawed steel hook and seized him. The master lost horse and stirrups as the evil spirit carried him off in a gust of wind. Alas! This was a case of

When the dhyana – nature encountered a monster the true achievement was hard; The monk of the river current met once more with a star of disaster.

Bringing his wind down to land, the demon king took the Tang Priest into the cave and called, "Commander of the vanguard!"

The junior devil who had made the plan came forward, knelt and said, "I am not worthy."

"How can you say that?" the demon king replied. "Once the commander – in – chief has spoken, white becomes black. What I said before was that if I failed to catch the Tang Priest, that would be that; but that if I succeeded I'd make you my commander of the vanguard. Your brilliant plan has succeeded today, so there is no reason why I should break faith with you. Bring the Tang Priest here and tell the underlings to fetch water, scrub the cooking pot, fetch some firewood and light the fire. When he's been steamed you and I will each have a piece of his flesh and live for ever."

"Your Majesty," the commander of the vanguard replied, "he mustn't be eaten yet."

"Why ever not?" the demon king asked. "We've captured him."

"It wouldn't matter if you ate him, Your Majesty," said the commander of the vanguard, "as far as Zhu Bajie and Friar Sand are concerned. They would be reasonable. But I'm worried about that Sun the Novice: he'd be really vicious. If he found out we'd eaten the Tang Priest he wouldn't come to give us a straight fight. He'd just thrust that gold – banded cudgel of his into the mountainside and make a hole so big that the whole mountain would collapse. We'd be homeless."

"What do you suggest, commander of the vanguard?" the demon king asked.

"In my opinion," the commander replied, "we should send the Tang Priest out to the back garden, tie him to a tree, and starve him for two or three days. That will clean him up inside and let us make sure that the three disciples don't come here looking for him. Once we've found out that they've gone home we can bring the Tang Priest out and enjoy him at our leisure. That'd be better, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, yes," the senior demon said with a laugh. "You're right, commander of the vanguard."

An order was issued and the Tang Priest taken into the back garden to be roped to a tree, while all the junior devils went out to the front to keep watch. Look at the venerable elder as he suffers in his bonds, tied up Chapter 85

tightly and unable to stop the tears rolling down his cheeks.

"Disciples," he called, "where did you chase those demons to when you went to capture them in the mountains? I have been captured by a wicked ogre and have met with disaster. When will I ever see you again? The pain is killing me."

Just when the tears from both eyes were joining in a single stream he heard someone calling from a tree opposite, "Venerable elder, you're here too."

Taking control of himself, the Tang Priest asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm a woodcutter who lives on this mountain," the other replied. "I've been tied up here for three days. I reckon they're going to eat me."

"Woodcutter," said the Tang Priest with tears in his eyes, "If you die it will only be you. You have nothing else to worry about. But if I die it won't be a clean end."

"What do you mean, it won't be a clean end, venerable elder?" the woodcutter asked. "You have no parents, wife or children, so if you die that'll be that."

"I am from the East," the Tang Priest replied, "and was going to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven.

I was going on the orders of Emperor Taizong of the Tang to worship the living Buddha and fetch the true scriptures. This was to save all the lonely souls in the underworld who have nobody to care for them. If I lose my life today the vain waiting will kill my sovereign and I will let down his ministers. Countless wronged souls in the City of the Unjustly Slain will suffer a terrible disappointment and never ever be able to escape from the wheel of life. The true achievement will all be turned to dust in the wind. How can that possibly be considered a clean end?"

When the woodcutter heard this the tears fell from his eyes as he said, "If you die that is all there to it. But my death will be even more painful for me to bear. I lost my father when I was a boy, and live alone with my mother. Because we had no property I have had to make our living as a woodcutter. My aged mother is eighty – two this year and I am her only support. If I die who will there be to bury her? It's very hard to bear: the pain of it is killing me."

When the venerable elder heard this he began to wail aloud, "Oh dear, oh dear, Even the mountain man thinks of his mother;

I am reciting the sutras in vain.

Serving one's monarch and serving one's parents are both the same in principle. You are moved by your mother's goodness to you and I by my sovereign lord's goodness to me." This was indeed a case of Weeping eyes looking at eyes that weep,

Chapter 85

1199

Journey to the West

A heartbroken one who sees off one with a broken heart.

But we will say no more of Sanzang's sufferings as we return to Monkey, who after driving the junior devil back down the grassy slope rushed back to the track to find that his master had disappeared. All that was left were the white horse and the luggage. In his alarm he led the horse and shouldered the carrying – pole as he headed for the top of the mountain in his search for the master. Oh dear! Indeed: The long – suffering monk of the river current had met with new suffering; The Great Sage, subduer of demons, had run into a demon.

If you do not know how his search for his master ended, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 86

The Mother of Wood Lends His Might in Defeating the Ogre

The Metal Lord Uses His Magic to Wipe Out the Monster

The story tells how the Great Sage Monkey was leading the horse and carrying the baggage while he searched the whole mountain top,

calling out for his master. Suddenly Pig came running up to him, puffing and panting, to ask, "Why are you shouting like that, brother?"

"The master's disappeared," Brother Monkey replied. "Have you seen him?"

"Why did you have to play that trick on me when I was being a good monk with the Tang Priest?" Pig asked.

"What was all that about me being commander of the vanguard? I had to fight for my life before I could beat that evil spirit and come back in one piece. You and Friar Sand were looking after the master, so why ask me about it?"

"I don't blame you, brother," said Monkey. "Somehow or other your eyes must have gone blurred— —you let the evil spirit get away and come back to catch the master again. When I went off to fight it I told Friar Sand to look after the master, and he's disappeared too."

"I expect he's taken the master somewhere for a crap," said Pig with a grin, but before he had finished speaking Friar Sand turned up.

"Where's the master, Friar Sand?" Monkey asked.

"You two must both be blind," retorted Friar Sand, "letting the evil spirit escape to come back for the master.

When I went to fight the evil spirit the master was left in the horse by himself."

At this Monkey leapt with rage, shouting, "He's fooled me! He's fooled me!"

Chapter 86

1200

Journey to the West

"How's he fooled you?" Friar Sand asked.

"It was a 'dividing the petals of the plum blossom' trick," Monkey replied, "to draw us three off so that he could make a blow for the heart and carry off the master. Whatever in the name of Heaven are we to do?"

He could not stop the tears from streaming down his cheeks, at which

Pig said, "Don't cry. If you cry you're a pustule. He can't be far away. He must be on this mountain. Let's look for him." The three of them had no better plan than to look for him on the mountain. When they had covered some six or seven miles they saw a cave palace at the foot of a beetling precipice:

Clean – cut pinnacles blocking the light,

Towering and grotesque – shaped rocks.

The fragrance of rate and wonderful flowers,

The beauty of red apricots and green peaches.

The ancient trees in front of the precipice,

Forty spans round, and with bark scarred by frost and rain;

The azure pines standing outside the gates,

Two thousand feet of green blue reaching up to the sky.

Pairs of wild cranes

That dance in the breeze at the mouth of the cave;

Mountain birds in couples

Chirping by day at the ends of the branches.

Clumps of yellow creepers like ropes,

Rows of misty willows with leaves like hanging gold.

Water fills the pools that are square;

All over the mountain are caves that are deep.

In the pools that are square

Dragons lie hidden with scales unchanged.

In the mountain's deep caves

Dwell ogres that long have been eaters of humans.

Chapter 86

This can be matched with the lands of immortals,

A den where the winds and the vapors are stored.

When Monkey saw this he took two or three paces forward, sprang towards the gates and saw that they were shut tight. Above them was a horizontal stone tablet on which was written in large letters LINKED RING CAVE:

BROKEN RIDGE:

HIDDEN MISTS MOUNTAIN.

"Strike, Pig," said Monkey. "This is where the evil spirit lives. The master must be here."

At this the idiot turned vicious, raised his rake, and brought it down on the gates with all his strength, smashing a big hole in them and shouting, "Ogre, send my master out at once if you don't want me to smash your gates down and finish the lot of you off." At this the junior devils on the gates rushed back inside to report, "Disaster, Your Majesty."

"What disaster?" the senior demon asked.

"Someone's smashed a hole in the front gates and is yelling that he wants his master," the junior devils replied.

"I wonder which one's come looking for him," said the demon king in a state of great alarm.

"Don't be frightened," said the commander of the vanguard. "Let me go out and take a look." He hurried straight to the front gates, twisted his head to one side and craned to look through the hole that had been smashed in them. He saw someone with a long snout and big ears.

"Don't worry, Your Majesty," he turned round and shouted at the top of his voice, "it's Zhu Bajie. He's not up to much and he won't dare try any nonsense on us. If he does we can open the gates and drag him inside to put in the steamer too. The only one to worry about is that hairy–cheeked monk with a face like a thunder god."

"Brother," said Pig when he heard this from outside, "he's not scared of

me but he is of you. The master's definitely inside. Come here quick."

"Evil damned beast," said Monkey abusively. "Your grandfather Monkey is here. Send my master out and I'll spare your life."

"This is terrible, Your Majesty," the commander of the vanguard reported. "Sun the Novice is here looking for him too." At this the demon king started complaining, "It's all because of your 'petal −dividing' or whatever you called it. You've brought disaster on us. How is this going to end?"

Chapter 86

1202

Journey to the West

"Don't worry, Your Majesty," the commander of the vanguard replied, "and don't start grumbling yet. That Sun the Novice is a monkey of great breadth of spirit. Although he has such tremendous magical power he's partial to flattery. We'll take an imitation human head out to fool him with, say a few flattering things to him and tell him we've eaten his master already. If we can take him in, the Tang Priest will be ours to enjoy. If we can't we'll have to think again."

"But where are we to get an imitation human head?" the demon king asked.

"I'll see if I can make one," the commander of the vanguard replied.

The splendid ogre then cut a piece of willow root with an axe of pure steel into the shape of a human head, spurted some human blood on it from his mouth to make it all sticky, and told a junior devil to take it to the gates on a lacquer tray, calling, "My Lord Great Sage, please overcome your anger and allow me to address you."

Brother Monkey really was partial to being flattered, and when he heard himself being addressed as "My Lord Great Sage" he grabbed hold of Pig and said, "Don't hit him. Let's hear what he has to say."

To this the junior devil with the tray replied, "When my king took your master into the cave the junior devils were naughty and behaved very badly. They gobbled and gnawed and grabbed and bit, and ate the whole of your master up except his head, which I have here."

"If you've eaten him up, that's that," Monkey replied. "Bring the head

out and let me see whether it's real or false." The junior devil threw the head out through the hole in the gates, a sight that started Pig howling and saying, "This is terrible. The master went in looking one way and he's come out looking like this."

"Idiot," said Monkey, "have a look and find out if it's real before you start crying."

"You're shameless," said Pig, "how could there ever be such a thing as a fake human head?"

'This one's a fake," Brother Monkey replied.

"How can you tell?" Pig asked. "When you throw a real human head it lands quietly," Monkey explained, "but when you throw a fake it makes a loud noise like a pair of wooden clappers. If you don't believe me, I'll throw it for you. Listen!" He picked the head up and threw it against a rock, where it gave a hollow ring.

"It was loud, brother," said Friar Sand.

"That means it's a fake," said Monkey. "I'll make it turn back into its real self to show you." Producing his gold—banded cudgel in a flash he hit the head open. When Pig looked he saw that it was a piece of willow root. This was too much for the idiot, who started talking abusively.

"I'll get you, you hairy lot," he said, "you may have hidden my master in your cave and fooled your ancestor Pig with a piece of willow root, but don't imagine that my master is just a willow—tree spirit in disguise."

The junior devil who was holding the tray was thrown into such a panic by this that he ran shaking with fear back to report, "It's terrible, terrible, terrible."

"What's so terribly terrible then?' the senior demon asked.

Chapter 86

1203

Journey to the West

"Zhu Bajie and Friar Sand were taken in, but Monkey's like an antique dealer— —he really knows his stuff," the junior demon replied. "He

could tell it was an imitation head. If only we could give him a real human head he might go away."

"But how are we to get one?" the senior demon wondered, then continued, "Fetch a human head we haven't eaten yet from the flaying shed." The devils then went to the shed and choose a fresh head, after which they gnawed all the skin off it till it was quite smooth and carried it out on a tray.

"My lord Great Sage," the messenger said, "I am afraid it was a fake head last time. But this really is Lord Tang's head. Our king had kept it so as to bring good fortune to our cave, but now he's making a special offering of it." He then threw the head out through the hole in the gates, it landed with a thud and rolled on the ground, gory with blood.

Seeing that this human head was a real one Monkey could not help starting to wail, in which he was joined by Pig and Friar Sand.

"Stop crying, brother," said Pig, holding back his tears. "This is very hot weather, and the head will soon become putrid. I'm going to fetch and bury it while it's still fresh. We can cry for him afterwards."

"You're right," said Monkey, and the idiot cradled the head against his chest, not caring about the filth, as he hurried up the cliff till he found a South–facing spot where the winds and the natural forces were gathered.

Here he hacked out a hole with his rake, buried the head, and piled a grave–mound over it. Only then did he say to Friar Sand, "You and big brother weep over him while I look for some offerings."

Going down to the side of a gill, he broke off some willow branches and gathered a few pebbles. Taking them back up to the tomb, he planted the willow branches on either side and piled the pebbles in front of it. "What's all that about?" Monkey asked.

"The willow branches are used instead of cypresses to shade the master's tomb for the time being," Pig answered, "and the pebbles are offerings to him instead of cakes."

"Cretin!" Monkey shouted. "He's already dead. What do you want to go offering him stones for?"

"Just to show what the living feel," Pig replied, "and out of mourning and respect."

"You'd better cut that nonsense out," Monkey replied. "Tell Friar Sand to come here. He can guard the tomb and keep an eye on the horse and the luggage while we two go and smash the cave palace up, capture the monster and break his body into ten thousand bits. Then we'll have avenged the master."

"You're absolutely right, big brother," said Friar Sand through his tears. "You two be careful. I'll keep watch here."

The splendid Pig then took off his black brocade tunic, tied his undershirt tightly, picked up his rake and followed Monkey. The two of them rushed straight for the stone gates, and with no more ado they smashed them down and shouted with a yell that made the heavens shake, "Give us our Tang Priest back alive!" This sent the souls flying from all the devils old and young in the cave, who complained that the commander of the vanguard had wronged them. "How are we going to deal with these monks now they've fought their way in through the gates?" the demon king asked.

"The ancients used to say," the commander of the vanguard replied, "'Put your hand in a basket of fish and it's bound to stink.' Now we're in this we've got to see it through. We'll just have to take our troops into battle Chapter 86

with these monks." When the demon heard this he had no alternative but to issue the order, "Stand together, my little ones. Bring your best weapons with you and come with me." They then charged out through the entrance of the cave with a great war cry.

The Great Sage and Pig quickly fell back a few paces before they held the devilish onslaught on a piece of flat ground on the mountainside, shouting, "Who's your best–known boss? Who's the ogre who captured our master?"

The devils had now palisaded their position, over which a multicolored embroidered flag flew, and the demon king shouted straight back as he held the iron mace, "Damned monks! Don't you know who I am? I'm the Great King of the Southern Mountains, and I've been running wild here for hundreds of years. I've eaten your Tang Priest up. What are you going to do about it?"

"You've got a nerve, you hairy beast," retorted Monkey abusively.

"How old are you, daring to call yourself after the Southern Mountains? Lord Lao Zi was the ancestor who opened up heaven and earth, but even he sits on the right of the Supreme Pure One. The Tathagata Buddha is the Honoured One who rules the world, and he sits below the Great Roc. Confucius the Sage is the Honoured One of the Confucian School, and all he's called is Master. So how dare you call yourself Great King of the Southern Mountains and talk about running wild for several hundred years? Don't move, and take this from your grandfather's cudgel!"

The evil spirit twisted aside to avoid the cudgel, which he parried with his iron mace. "How dare you try to put me down like that, monkey – face," said the monster, glaring furiously. "What kind of powers have you got, acting like a maniac at my gates."

"I'll get you, you nameless beast," replied Brother Monkey with a grin. "You evidently don't know who I am, so just stand there and make yourself brave while I tell you:

My ancestral home is in the Eastern Continent,

Where heaven and earth nourished me for thousands of years.

On the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit was a magic stone egg;

When the egg broke open my roots were inside.

My birth was not like that of an ordinary being:

My body was formed when sun and moon mated.

1 cultivated myself with formidable effect;

Heaven gave me a perceptive and cinnabar head.

As the Great Sage I dwelt in the palace in the clouds,

Using my strength in a fight against the Dipper and Bull Palace.

A hundred thousand heavenly troops could get nowhere near me;

All the stars in the sky were easily subdued.

My fame resounds throughout the cosmos;

I know all about everything between earth and sky.

Since my conversion to Sakyamuni's teachings

1 have been helping my master on his journey to the West.

When I clear a path through mountains no one can stop me;

My skill at bridging rivers causes demons distress.

In forests I use my power to seize tigers and leopards;

I capture wild beasts bare—handed before sheer cliffs.

For the sake of the East's true achievement I have come to the Western Regions; What evil monster will dare to show itself?

I hate the wicked beasts who have murdered my master;

Their lives will all be ended at this moment."

These remarks both shocked and infuriated the ogre, who ground his teeth, sprang forward and struck at Brother Monkey with his iron mace. Monkey blocked it effortlessly with his cudgel and would have said some more to him when Pig, unable to restrain himself any longer, started swinging wildly at the demon king's commander of the vanguard. The commander of the vanguard led his whole force into action, and a hectic and splendid battle was fought on that piece of level ground on the mountainside: The monk from the great and superior country in the East

Was going to fetch true scriptures from the Western Paradise.

The great leopard of the Southern mountains breathed out wind and clouds To block their way through the mountains and show off his prowess.

With tricks

And deception

He had foolishly captured the priest from Great Tang.

Then he met Monkey with his tremendous powers

Chapter 86

1206

Journey to the West

As well as the famous Zhu Bajie.

While the demons fought on level ground in the mountains

Dust clouds arose and darkened the sky.

Above the fray rose the junior devils' roars

As they thrust out wildly with spear and with sword.

On the other side the monks shouted back,

Fighting with rake and with cudgel together.

The Great Sage was a matchless hero,

And Pig in his perfection reveled in his strength.

The ancient ogre of the South,

And his vanguard commander

For the sake of a piece of the Tang Priest's flesh

Were prepared to throw their own lives away.

These two hated them for killing their master:

The other two were set on murder because of the Tang Priest.

The struggle long swayed to and fro,

The clashes and charges yielding no victor.

When Monkey realized that the junior devils were fighting so hard that repeated attacks were failing to drive them back he used body—dividing magic, plucked out a bunch of hairs, chewed them up in his mouth, spat the pieces out, called "Change!" and turned them all into his own doubles, each wielding a gold—banded cudgel and fighting his way into the cave from the outside. The one or two

hundred junior devils, unable to cope with their attacks from all sides, all fled for their lives back into the cave. Monkey and Pig then fought their way back out through the enemy ranks from the inside. The evil spirits who had no sense tried to stand up to the rake and found themselves bleeding from nine wounds, or resisted the cudgel and had their flesh and bones beaten to paste. The Great King of the Southern Mountains was so alarmed that he fled for his life on his clouds and wind. The commander of the vanguard, who did not know how to do transformations, had already fallen to Monkey's club and been revealed as what he really was: an iron-backed gray wolf ogre.

Pig went up to him, turned him over by his leg, and said, "Goodness only knows how many piglets and lambs this so-and-so has eaten."

Chapter 86

1207

Journey to the West

Monkey meanwhile shook himself, put the hair back on his body and said, "No time to lose, idiot. After the demon king! Make him pay for the master's life." Pig turned back, but all the little Monkeys had disappeared.

"Your magic bodies have all gone, brother," he exclaimed.

"I've taken them back," Monkey replied.

"Splendid," said Pig, "splendid." The two of them went back in triumph, feeling very pleased.

When the senior demon escaped back to the cave he told his underlings to move rocks and earth to barricade the front gates. The surviving junior demons were all trembling with terror as they barricaded the entrance: they would not have dared to stick their heads out again now. Monkey led Pig to the gates and shouted without getting any response. Pig's rake made no impression when he struck them with it.

Realizing what had happened, Monkey said, "Don't waste your effort, Pig. They've barricaded the gates."

"Then how are we going to avenge the master?" Pig asked.

"Let's go back to his grave and see Friar Sand," Brother Monkey

replied.

When they got back there they found Friar Sand still weeping, at which Pig became more miserable than ever, throwing down his rake, prostrating himself on the tomb mound and beating the ground with his hand as he howled, "Poor, poor Master. Master from so far away! I'll never see you again!"

"Don't distress yourself so, brother," said Monkey. "The evil spirit may have barricaded his front gates, but he's bound to have a back entrance to go in and out through. You two wait here while I go and look for it.

"Do be careful, brother," said Pig through his tears. "Don't get caught yourself too. We could never cope if we had to wail for the master then for you by turns. We'd make an awful mess of it."

"No problem," said Monkey. "I've got my ways of doing things."

Putting his cudgel away the splendid Great Sage tightened his kilt, stepped out and went back over the mountain. On his way he heard the sound of flowing water. When he turned round to look he saw that there was a brook flowing down from above him, and beside the gill was a gate, to the left of which was a drainpipe from which red water was coming out.

"Goes without saying," he thought. "That must be the back entrance. If I go as myself the junior demons may well recognize me when I open the door and see them. I'd better turn into a water snake to go in. No, hold on.

If the master's spirit knows that I've turned into a water snake he'll be angry with me as a monk for turning into something so long drawn −out. I'd better turn into a little crab. No, that's no good either. The master would be cross with me for having too many legs for a monk." So he turned into a water rat who slipped into the water with a soughing sound and went straight to the inner courtyard along the drainpipe. Here he thrust his head out for a look around and saw some junior devils setting out gobbets of human flesh to dry in a sunny spot.

"Heavens!" said Monkey. "That must be what they can't finish from the master's flesh. No doubt they're drying it to save for a rainy day. If I turned back into myself now, went up to them and wiped them out with one swing of my cudgel I'd be making myself look brave but stupid. I'll do another change, go in to look for Chapter 86

the senior devil, and find out what's what." With that he jumped out of the drain, shook himself, and turned himself into a winged ant. Indeed:

Weak and tiny and known as black colts,

They hide away for many a day till they have wings and can fly.

Casually crossing beside the bridge they draw up their ranks;

They enjoy battles of high strategy under the bed.

Because they know when rain is coming they block their holes

And build their mounds of dust that turn to ashes.

Light they are, and delicate and quick,

Rarely observed as they pass the wicker gate.

He spread his wings and flew straight into the inner hall, unseen and unheard. Here the senior demon could be seen sitting very angrily in the seat of honour, while a junior devil ran up from behind to report, "Many congratulations, Your Majesty."

"What on?" the senior demon asked.

"I was on lookout by the gill outside the back door just now," the junior devil replied, "when suddenly I heard some loud wails. I rushed up to the top of the mountain to take a look and saw Zhu Bajie, Sun the Novice and Friar Sand all bowing to a grave and weeping bitterly. I think they must have taken that head for the Tang Priest's and buried it, piled up a grave mound and mourned for it."

When Monkey overheard this he said to himself with delight, "From what he's said they've still got the master here and haven't eaten him yet. I'll take a look around and find out if he's still alive, then have a word with him."

The splendid Great Sage then flew into the main hall and looked all around until he saw a very tiny doorway on one side of it. It was very firmly shut, and when he squeezed through the narrow gap between the doors he found himself in a big garden in which he could vaguely

make out the sound of sobbing. Flying further inside he saw a clump of tall trees at the foot of which were tied two men. One of these was the Tang Priest. As soon as Monkey saw him he felt an itch in his heart that he could not scratch.

He could not help turning back into himself, going up to Sanzang and calling, "Master."

When the Tang Priest saw who it was he started crying and saying, "Is that you, Wukong? Save me as quickly as you can, Wukong."

"Don't keep saying my name, Master," Monkey replied. "There are people at the front and the secret may get out. As you're still alive I can rescue you. The ogres said they'd already eaten you and tricked me with an Chapter 86

imitation human head. Now we're in a bitter struggle with them. There's no need to worry, Master. Just stick it out for a little longer till I've beaten the evil spirit, then I'll be able to rescue you."

The Great Sage said the words of a spell, shook himself, turned into an ant again and flew back into the hall, where he landed on the main beam. From here he saw the surviving junior devils jostling and shouting. One of them sprang out from the crowd and said, "Your Majesty, now they know we've blocked the main gate and they won't be able to fight their way in they've given up hope. They've even made a tomb for the wrong head.

They spent today mourning for him, and they'll do the same again tomorrow and the day after. I'm sure they'll go away after that. Once we find out that they've split up we can bring the Tang Priest out, chop him up into little bits, and fry him with aniseed. Then everyone will be able to eat a piece when he's steaming hot, and we'll all live forever."

At this another junior devil clapped his hands together and said, "No, no, he'd taste much better steamed."

"Boiling him would save some firewood," another put in.

"He's such a rare and wonderful thing," said someone else, "that we ought to salt him down and take our time over eating him."

When Monkey heard all this from up among the beams he thought with fury, "What harm did my master ever do you? Why are you making these plans to eat him?" He pulled out a handful of hairs, chewed them up into little pieces, blew them lightly out of his mouth and silently recited the words of the spell that turned all the pieces into sleep insects. These he threw into the faces of all the devils, and the insects crawled up their noses, gradually making the devils feel sleepy. Before long the junior devils were all lying stretched out fast asleep.

The demon king was the only one left fitfully awake as he kept rubbing his face and head, sneezing and pinching his nose.

"Perhaps he knows about how to cope with sleep insects," Monkey thought. "I'd better give him a double dose." He pulled out a hair, made two more sleep insects as before, and threw them into the demon's face to crawl up his nose, one up the left nostril and one up the right. The demon king jumped to his feet, stretched, yawned twice and fell fast asleep, breathing heavily.

Quietly delighted, Monkey then sprang down from the roof and turned back into himself. He produced his cudgel from his ear and waved it till it was the thickness of a duck egg, then with a loud bang broke down the side door, ran into the garden at the back and called out, "Master!"

"Untie me quick, disciple," the venerable elder said. "Being roped up like this has been agony."

"Be patient, Master," said Monkey. "When I've killed the evil spirit I'll come and untie you." He then hurried back into the hall, lifted his cudgel and was about to strike when he stopped and thought, "No, this is wrong. I ought to release the master before I kill the evil spirit." He went back into the garden, where he changed his mind again: "No, I'll kill the monster first." This happened two or three times till finally he came dancing back into the garden, where his master's grief turned to joy at the sight of him.

"You monkey," he said, "I suppose it's because you're beside yourself with pleasure at seeing me still alive that you're dancing about like that." Only then did Monkey go up to him, untie him, and help him walk away.

The man tied to the other tree then called out, "Please save me too in your great mercy, my lord."

The venerable elder stopped and said, "Untie him too, Wukong."

"Who's he?" Monkey asked.

Chapter 86

1210

Journey to the West

"He was captured and brought here a day before me," Sanzang replied. "He's a woodcutter. He tells me his mother is very old and he is most worried about her. He is a very dutiful son. You must save him too."

Doing as he was bid, Monkey untied the other man and took them both out through the back gate, up the scar and across the ravine. "Thank you for rescuing this man and me, worthy disciple," said Sanzang. "Where are Wuneng and Wujing?"

"Mourning for you over there," Monkey replied, "Give them a shout."

Sanzang then shouted at the top of his voice, "Bajie! Bajie!" The idiot, who had been weeping so much that his head was spinning, wiped away the snot and tears to call, "Friar Sand, the master's come back as a ghost.

That him calling, isn't it?"

"Idiot," shouted Monkey, going up to him, "that's no ghost. It's the master himself."

When Friar Sand looked up and saw who it was he fell to his knees in front of Sanzang and said "Master, you've suffered terribly. How did big brother rescue you?" Monkey then told them everything that had happened.

When Pig heard all this he gnashed his teeth, unable to restrain himself from knocking the tomb mound over with one blow of his rake, digging out the head and smashing it to pulp "Why are you hitting it?" the Tang Priest asked.

"Master," said Pig, "goodness only knows what kind of wretch he was, but we all mourned for him."

"It was thanks to him that I'm still alive," Sanzang replied. "When you disciples attacked their gates and demanded me they took him out to fob you off with. Otherwise they would have killed me. I think we

should bury him properly as a mark of our monastic respect." When the idiot heard his master saying this he buried that bag of flesh and bone that had been beaten to a pulp and piled up a tomb mound over it.

"Master," said Brother Monkey with a smile, "won't you sit here for a while while I go to wipe them out?"

With that he leapt down the cliff, crossed the ravine, went into the cave and took the ropes with which the Tang Priest and the woodcutter had been hound into the hall, where he used them to truss together the arms and legs of the demon king, who was still asleep. He then lifted the demon up with his cudgel onto his shoulder and took him out by the back door.

"You like making things difficult for yourself, brother," said Pig when he saw him coming from a distance.

"Why don't you find another to balance him?"

Monkey then set the demon king down in front of Pig, who raised his rake and was just about to hit him when Monkey said, "Wait a moment. We haven't captured the junior devils in the cave yet."

"If there are any left," Pig said, "take me in with you to smash them."

"Smashing them would be too much trouble," Monkey replied. "The best thing would be to find some firewood and wipe them out that way."

When the woodcutter heard this he led Pig to a hollow to the East to find some broken ends of bamboo, pines that had lost their needles, hollow stumps of willows, creepers broken off from their roots, withered artemisia, old reeds, rushes and dead mulberry. They carried a lot of this into the back entrance, where Monkey set it alight and Pig fanned the flames with both ears. Then the Great Sage sprang up, shook himself and put the Chapter 86

sleep – insect hairs back on his body. When the junior devils woke up they were all already on fire. Poor things! None of them had the faintest chance of surviving. When the whole cave was burnt right out the disciples went back to see the master.

When Sanzang saw that the senior demon had woken up and was shouting he called, "Disciples, the evil spirit has come round." Pig went up and killed him with one blow of his rake, whereupon the ogre turned back into his real form as a leopard spirit with a coat patterned like mugwort flowers.

"Leopards with flower – patterned coats can eat tigers," Monkey observed, "and this one could turn into a human too. Killing him has prevented a lot of serious trouble in future." The venerable elder could not express his gratitude strongly enough, and he then mounted the saddle. "My home isn't far from here to the Southwest, sirs," said the woodcutter. "I invite you to come there to meet my mother and accept my kowtows of thanks for saving my life. Then I'll see you gentlemen along your way."

Sanzang was happy to accept, and instead of riding he walked there with his three disciples and the woodcutter. After they had followed a winding path to the Southwest for a short distance this is what they saw.

Lichen growing across a stone – flagged path,

Wisteria joining across the wicker gate,

Chains of mountains on every side, And a wood full of singing birds.

A dense thicket of pine and bamboo,

Rare and wonderful flowers in profusion.

The place is remote and deep amid the clouds,

A thatched cottage with a bamboo fence.

While they were still some distance away they could make out an old woman leaning on the wicker gate with tears streaming from her eyes, weeping and calling to heaven and earth for her son.

As soon as the woodcutter saw his mother he left the Tang Priest behind as he rushed straight to the gate, knelt down and said, "Mother, I'm back."

Throwing her arms around him the woman said, "My boy, when you didn't come home for days on end I thought the mountain lord must have caught you and killed you. I've suffered terrible heartache. If you weren't killed why didn't you come back before? Where are your

carrying – pole, ropes and axe?"

The woodcutter kowtowed as he replied, "Mother, the mountain lord did capture me and tie me to a tree. I was lucky to escape with my life, thanks to these gentlemen. They are arhats sent by the Tang court in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. This gentleman was captured by the mountain lord and tied to a tree as well. His three disciples have enormous magic powers. They killed the mountain lord with a single blow: he was a leopard with mugwort flower spots who had become a spirit. They burnt all the junior devils to Chapter 86

death, untied the senior gentleman and then untied me too. I owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude: but for them your son would certainly be dead. Now that the mountain is completely safe I'll be able to walk around at night without any danger."

After hearing this the old woman came forward to greet Sanzang and his disciples, kowtowing at every step.

Then she led them in through the wicker gate to sit down in the thatched cottage. Mother and son next performed endless kowtows as expressions of their gratitude before hastily and in a fluster preparing them some vegetarian food as a mark of their thanks.

"Brother," said Pig to the woodcutter, "I know you're hard up here. Just put something simple together for us.

Don't go to a lot of trouble and effort."

"Quite frankly, sir," the woodcutter replied, "we're very poor here. We don't have any gill fungus, button mushrooms, peppers or aniseed. All we can offer you gentlemen are some wild vegetables."

"We're putting you to a lot of trouble," said Pig. "Be as quick as you can. We're starving."

"It'll soon be ready," the woodcutter replied, and before long a table and stools were set out and wiped clean, and several dishes of wild vegetables served:

Tender – scalded day lilies,

White lumps of pickled scallion,

Knotweed and purslane,

Shepherds purse and "goosegut blossom."

The "swallows stay away" was delicious and tender;

The tiny fists of beansprouts were crisp and green.

Indigo heads boiled soft,

White – stewed "dog footprints,"

"Cat's ears,"

Wild turnips,

All with tender and tasty gray noodles.

"Scissor shafts,"

"Oxpool aid,"

Tipped in the pot with broom purslane.

Broken grain purslane,

Chapter 86

1213

Journey to the West

And lettuce purslane,

All green, delicious and smooth.

"Birdflower" fried in oil,

Superb water – chestnuts,

Roots of reeds and wild – rice stems,

Four kinds of excellent water plants.

"Wheat – mother,"

Delicate and finely flavored;

"Raggedy patches"

You could never wear.

Under the bitter sesame bed runs a fence.

Sparrows wander around,

Macaques leave their footprints,

Eager to eat it all when fried and piping hot.

Sloping wormwood and green artemisia surround crown daisy chrysanthemums; The moths fly around the buckwheat.

Bald "goat's ear,"

Wolfberry fruits,

That don't need oil when combined with dark indigo.

A meal of every kind of wild vegetable

As a mark of the woodcutter's reverent thanks.

When master and disciples had eaten their fill they packed up ready to start out again. Not daring to press them to stay, the woodcutter asked his mother to come out and bow to them in thanks again. He then kowtowed, fetched a club of jujube wood, fastened his clothes tight, and came out to see them on their way.

Friar Sand led the horse, Pig carried the shoulder－pole, and Monkey followed close behind them while the master put his hands together on the back of the horse and said, "Brother woodcutter, could you kindly lead us to the main track? We will take out leave of you there." Together they then climbed high, went down slopes, Chapter 86

skirted ravines and negotiated inclines. "Disciples," said the venerable elder thoughtfully as he rode,

"Since leaving my monarch to come to the West

I have made a long journey across a great distance.

At each river and mountain I have met with disaster,

Barely escaping from monsters and fiends.

My heart has been set on the Three Stores of scriptures,

And my every thought is of Heaven above.

When will my toil and my labor be ended?

When will I go home, my journey completed?"

When the woodcutter heard Sanzang saying this he said, "Don't be so downhearted, sir. It's only some three hundred miles West along this road to India, the land of paradise."

As soon as Sanzang heard this he dismounted and replied, "Thank you for bringing us so far. Now that we are on the main track, please go home now, brother woodcutter, and give our respects to your venerable mother.

We poor monks have no way to reward you for the sumptuous meal you gave us just now except by reciting surras morning and evening to protect you and your mother and enable both of you to live to be a hundred."

The woodcutter took his leave of them and went back by the way he had came. Master and disciples then headed West together.

Indeed:

The ogre subdued and wrongs set to right, he escaped from his peril;
Having been shown this kindness he set out on his way with the greatest of care.

If you don't know how long it was till they reached the Western Heaven, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 87

When Heaven Is Offended in Fengxian It Stops the Rain

The Great Sage Urges Goodness and Brings a Downpour

Chapter 87

Deep and mysterious is the Great Way;

What news is there of it?

When revealed it will alarm ghosts and divine beings.

It controls the universe,

Divides darkness and light;

In the world of true happiness there is no competition.

Before the Vulture Peak

Pearls and jewels emerge,

Shining with every color.

It illuminates all beings that live between heaven and earth;

Those who understand it live as long as mountains and seas.

The story tells how Sanzang and his three disciples took their leave of the woodcutter on the Hidden Clouds Mountain and hurried along the main road. After they had been going for several days they suddenly saw a walled and moated city not far before them.

"Wukong," said Sanzang, "is that city ahead of us India, do you think?"

"No, no," said Monkey shaking his head. "Although the Tathagata lives in a paradise there are no cities there.

It's a great mountain, Vulture Peak, on which are the high buildings and halls of Thunder Monastery. Even if we've now reached the land of India this isn't where the Buddha lives. I don't know how far India is from Vulture Peak. Presumably this city is one of the frontier prefectures of India. We'll know when we get there."

Soon they were outside the city, where Sanzang dismounted to go in through the triple gates. Here they found the people destitute and the streets deserted. When they reached the market there were many black–clad government servants lined up on either side of a number of officials wearing their hats and sashes of office and standing under

the eaves of a building. As the four travelers came along the road these men did not give way at all, so Pig in his rough way raised his snout and shouted, "Out of the way! Out of the way!"

When the men looked up with a start and saw what he looked like their bones went soft, their sinews turned numb and they fell over, shouting, "Evil spirits! Evil spirits!"

This gave the officials standing under the eaves such a fright that they were shivering as they bowed and asked, "Where are you from?"

Sanzang, who was worried that his disciples would cause trouble, pushed himself forward and said to the men,

"I am a monk sent by His Majesty the Great Tang emperor to worship the Lord Buddha and fetch the scriptures in the Great Thunder Monastery in the land of India. Our journey brings us to this distinguished place, but as we do not know its name and have not yet found a place to stay we hope that you gentlemen will Chapter 87

forgive us if we have caused any offence to your customs on entering your city."

Only then did the officials return his courtesy and say, "This is the prefecture of Fengxian, one of the frontier prefectures of India. Because we have been suffering from drought for years on end the marquis has sent us to put up a notice here calling for masters of the Dharma to pray for rain and save the people."

"Where's the notice?" asked Monkey when he heard this.

"Here," the officials said. "The arcade has only just been swept clean: we haven't posted it yet."

"Bring it here and show me," said Brother Monkey. The officials then opened the notice out and hung it up under the eaves. Monkey and the others went up to read it, and this was what was written on it: Shangguan, Marquis of Fengxian Prefecture in Great India, issues this notice to invite enlightened teachers and great masters of the Dharma. This country with its prosperous soldiers and people has been afflicted with drought for years. Military and civil land alike has been devastated; the rivers have dried up and the ditches are empty. There

is no water in the wells, and the springs have stopped flowing. While the rich are barely managing to stay alive, the poor cannot survive. A bushel of wheat costs a hundred pieces of silver; a bundle of firewood costs five ounces. Girls of ten are being sold for three pints of rice; boys of five are being given to whoever will take them. Because the city dwellers fear the law they pawn their clothes to buy the necessities for survival; but in the countryside thugs rob and eat people in order to live. I have therefore issued this notice in the hope that wise and worthy men from all around will pray for rain to save the people. The will be richly rewarded for their kindness with a thousand pieces of silver. This is no empty promise. Let those who would take it up come to this notice.

When he had read it Monkey asked the officials, "What's Shangguan?"

"Shangguan is our marquis' surname," they replied.

"It's a very rare surname," said Monkey with a laugh.

"You've never been to school, brother," said Pig. "There's a bit at the end of the book *The Hundred Surnames* that goes 'Ouyang and Shangguan.'"

"Stop this idle chatter, disciples," said Sanzang. "If any of you know how to pray for rain, bring them a fall of timely rain and save the people from this affliction: that would be a very good thing indeed to do. If you cannot, we must be on our way and waste no more time."

"What's so difficult about praying for rain?" Monkey asked. "I can turn rivers upside down, stir up the sea, move the stars and constellations about, kick the sky, churn up water in wells, breathe out mist and clouds, carry mountains, drive the moon along and summon wind and rain. They're all child's play. Nothing to them!"

When the officials heard this they sent two of their number straight to the prefectural offices to report, "Your Excellency, something very splendid indeed has happened."

The marquis, who was burning incense and praying silently at the time, asked what it was when he heard that something splendid had happened. "We were taking the notice to post at the entrance to the market," the officials replied, "when four monks came along who said that they have been sent by the Great Tang in the East to the Great Thunder Monastery in India to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. As soon as they Chapter 87

read the notice they said they could bring timely rain, which is why we have come here to report."

Refusing to take a sedan—chair, horse or large retinue, the marquis went on foot in his robes of office straight to the entrance to the market in order to invite the strangers with the utmost courtesy to pray for rain.

"His Excellency the marquis is here," it was suddenly announced, and everybody moved out of the way.

As soon as he saw the Tang Priest the marquis, who showed no fear of his hideous disciples, prostrated himself in the middle of the street and said, "I am Marquis Shangguan of Fengxian Prefecture, and I have bathed and perfumed myself in order to beg you teachers to pray for the rain that will save the people. I implore you in your great mercy to give play to your divine powers and bring us deliverance."

Returning his courtesies, Sanzang said, "This is no place to talk. We will be able to act when we have gone to a monastery."

"Please come with me to my humble palace," the marquis replied. "We have a pure place there."

Master and disciples then led the horse and carried the luggage straight to the palace, where they all exchanged greetings and the marquis ordered tea and a vegetarian meal. When the food arrived a little later Pig ate for all he was worth like a hungry tiger, terrifying the waiters, who trembled as they kept coming and going with more and more soup and rice. They looked like the figures on one of those revolving lanterns, and they could just keep him supplied until he had eaten his fill. Only then did he stop.

When the meal was over the Tang Priest expressed his thanks then asked, "How long has the drought lasted here, Your Excellency?" To this the marquis replied,

"This is a part of the great land of India,

Fengxian Prefecture of which I am governor.

For three years on end we have suffered from drought:

Grass does not grow, and the grain has all died.

Business is hard for rich and for poor;

Nearly all of the families are weeping with grief.

Two thirds of the people have now died of starvation;

The rest barely survive, like a candle flame in the wind.

I have issued a notice for worthies

And am lucky you monks have come to our land.

If you bring the people a whole inch of rain

A thousand in silver will be your reward."

Chapter 87

1218

Journey to the West

When Monkey heard this his face showed his pleasure as he chuckled, "Don't say that, don't say that. If you promise us a reward of a thousand pieces of silver you won't get a single drop of rain. But if you put it in terms of accumulating merit I'll provide you with plenty of rain."

The marquis, a thoroughly upright and good man who cared deeply for his people, invited Monkey to take the seat of honour, then bowed to him and said, "Teacher, if you really can show us this great compassion this humble official will do nothing to offend against morality."

"Please get up," said Monkey, "only look after my master well while I do the job."

"How are you going to do it, brother?" asked Friar Sand. "

"You and Pig are to must come here and be my assistants outside while I summon a dragon to make rain,"

Monkey replied. Pig and Friar Sand did as he bade them, and while the three of them went outside the marquis burned incense and prayed. Sanzang sat there reciting sutras.

While Monkey recited the spell and said the magic words a dark cloud appeared to the East and slowly moved till it was in front of the hall: it was Ao Guang, the ancient dragon of the Eastern Sea. Ao Guang then put away his cloud feet and turned himself into human form to go up to Monkey, bow low to him with full courtesy and ask, "What have you sent for this humble dragon to do, Great Sage?"

"Please rise," Monkey replied. "The only reason why I have troubled you to make this long journey is because there has been a drought in this prefecture of Fengxian for years on end. I'd like to ask you if you couldn't send some rain."

"I must inform you, Great Sage," the dragon replied, "that although I can make rain I can only act on the orders of Heaven. I would never dare come here to make rain on my own authority without Heaven's instructions."

"As our journey brought us this way I asked you specially to come here to make rain and save the people,"

said Monkey, "so why are you trying to get out of it?"

"I'd never dare," the dragon king replied. "I came because you summoned me with the magic words, Great Sage, and I'd never dare try to get out of it. In the first place I haven't had an edict from Heaven, and secondly I haven't brought the magic rain—making generals with me. How could I, Great Sage? If you wish to be a savior, you must let me go back to the sea to muster my forces while you go to the heavenly palace to obtain an imperial edict for a fall of rain and ask the officials in charge of water to release us dragons, so that I can make rain in the quantities ordered."

Accepting the force of his argument, Brother Monkey had to let the old dragon go back to the sea. He then told the Tang Priest what the dragon king had said.

"In that case you had better go and do that," the Tang Priest said. "But don't be telling lies."

Monkey then told Pig and Friar Sand to look after the master while he went up to the heavenly palace. No sooner had the splendid Great Sage said he was going than he was out of sight.

"Where has Lord Sun gone?" the marquis asked, trembling with shock.

"He's gone up to Heaven on a cloud," replied Pig with a grin. With great reverence the marquis then issued an urgent order that all the people in the big and little streets of the city, whether nobility, high officials, gentry, commoners, soldiers or civilians, were to worship dragon–king tablets and set out water urns with sprigs of willow in them in front of their gates. They were also to burn incense and pray to Heaven.

Once on his somersault cloud Monkey went straight to the Western Gate of Heaven, where the Heavenly King Lokapala soon appeared at the head of his heavenly soldiers and warriors to greet him and say, "Great Sage, have you fetched the scriptures yet?"

"Quite soon now," Monkey replied. "We've reached a frontier prefecture called Fengxian on the borders of India now. It hasn't rained for three whole years there, and the people are suffering terribly. I want to pray for rain to save them. I sent for the dragon king, but he told me that he couldn't do it on his own authority without a heavenly order, which is why I've come to see the Jade Emperor to request an edict."

"I don't think it's supposed to rain there," the heavenly king said. "I heard just now that the marquis of Fengxian had behaved disgracefully and offended both Heaven and Earth. His Majesty took it badly and immediately had a rice mountain, a flour mountain and a huge gold lock set up. It won't rain till all three have been knocked over or snapped." Not understanding what all this was about, Monkey demanded to see the Jade Emperor, and, not daring to stop him, the heavenly king let him in.

Going straight to the Hall of Universal Brightness, Brother Monkey was met by the four heavenly teachers, who asked, "What are you here for, Great Sage?"

"On my journey escorting the Tang Priest I've reached Fengxian Prefecture on the frontiers of India, where there is a drought," Monkey replied. "The marquis there has been asking for magicians to pray for rain. I sent for the dragon king to order him to make rain, but he said that he could not do so on his own authority without an edict from the Jade Emperor. I have now come to request an edict in order to relieve the people's suffering."

"But it's not supposed to rain there," said the four heavenly teachers.

"As to whether it's supposed to rain or not," said Monkey with a smile, "could I trouble you to take me in to submit a memorial so that I can find out whether I can still get a favour done?"

To this the heavenly teacher Ge Xianweng replied, "As the saying goes, 'a fly that needs a net for a veil— —what a nerve!'"

"Don't talk nonsense," said Xu of Jingyang. "Just take him in."

Qiu Hongji, Zhang Daoling, Ge and Xu took Monkey to the outside of the Hall of Miraculous Mist, where they reported, "Your Majesty, Sun Wukong has reached Fengxian Prefecture in India and wants to obtain rain.

He has come to ask for an edict."

"Three years ago," the Jade Emperor replied, "on the twenty—fifth day of the twelfth month, when we were inspecting the myriad heavens and travelling through the three worlds, we arrived at his city. We saw that Shangguan was most wicked; he knocked over the vegetarian offerings to heaven to feed to dogs, spoke foully, and was guilty of lese—majeste. That is why we set up those three things in the Hall of Fragrance. Take Sun Wukong to see them. When those three things have been accomplished we will issue our edict; but if they are not, then do not meddle in what does not concern you."

Chapter 87

1220

Journey to the West

When the four heavenly teachers led Brother Monkey to the Hall of Fragrance he saw a mountain of rice about a hundred feet high and a mountain of flour about two hundred feet high. Beside the rice mountain was a chicken the size of a fist eating the rice, sometimes with quick pecks, sometimes with slow ones. Beside the flour mountain was a golden—haired Pekinese licking the flour, sometimes with long licks and sometimes with short ones. To the left of it a golden padlock about one foot three or four inches long hung from an iron frame.

The crossbar of the lock was about the thickness of a finger, and under it was a lamp, the flame of which was heating the bar.

Not understanding what all this was about, Monkey turned back to ask the heavenly teachers, "What does it mean?"

"When that wretch offended Heaven the Jade Emperor had these three things set up," the heavenly teachers replied. "That place will only be due for rain when the chicken has eaten all the rice, the dog has licked up all the flour, and the lamp has melted the bar of the lock."

When Monkey heard this he went pale with shock, and he dared make no more memorials to the throne. He left the palace hall overcome with embarrassment. "Don't take it so badly, Great Sage," said the four heavenly teachers with smiles. "This is something that can be resolved through goodness. Once a single kind thought moves Heaven the rice and flour mountains will collapse and the bar of the padlock will be broken. If you can persuade the marquis to return to goodness then blessings will come of themselves."

Monkey accepted their advice, and instead of going back to the Hall of Miraculous Mist to take his leave of the Jade Emperor he headed straight down to the lower world and its ordinary mortals. Within an instant he was at the Western Gate of Heaven, where he saw Heavenly King Lokapala again, who asked, "Did you get the decree you wanted?" Monkey told him about the rice and flour mountains and the metal lock.

"What you said to me was quire right," he continued. "The Jade Emperor refuses to issue a decree. Just now the heavenly teachers told me as they saw me off that the secret of blessings lay in persuading that so—and—so to return to goodness." With that Monkey took his leave and went down to the lower world on his cloud.

When the marquis, Sanzang, Pig, Friar Sand and the officials high and low all welcomed him back they crowded round him asking questions. Monkey then shouted at the marquis, "It's all because on the twenty—fifth day of the twelfth month three years ago you offended Heaven and Earth that the people are suffering, you wretch. That's why rain won't be sent now."

At this the marquis was so alarmed that he fell to his knees, prostrated himself on the ground and asked, "How do you know about what happened three years ago, teacher?"

"Why did you knock the vegetarian offerings to Heaven over to feed to dogs?" said Monkey, "You'd better tell me the truth."

Not daring to conceal anything, the marquis said, "On the twenty

—fifth of the twelfth month three years ago I was making offerings to Heaven within the palace. As my wife was wicked we quarreled and said bad things to each other. In an unthinking outburst of fury I knocked over the table with the offerings and scattered the vegetarian food. It's true that I called the dogs to eat it up. I never realized that Heaven would take offence at this and harm the common people. For the last couple of years it has been preying on my mind. My thoughts have been disturbed, and I haven't been able to understand why. I never realized that it was because Heaven had taken offence that it was inflicting this disaster on the common people. Now that you have come down to visit us, teacher, I beg you to enlighten me on what the upper world intends to do."

Chapter 87

1221

Journey to the West

"That happened to be a day on which the Jade Emperor was visiting the lower world," Monkey replied.

"When he saw you feed the vegetarian food to the dogs and heard your foul language the Jade Emperor set three things up to remember you by."

"What three things, brother?" Pig asked.

"In the Hall of Fragrance he had set up a rice mountain about a hundred feet high and a flour mountain about two hundred feet high. Beside the rice mountain is a chicken the size of a fist who's eating it with quick pecks and slow pecks. Beside the flour mountain is a golden—haired Pekinese licking the flour up with long licks and short licks. And to the left is an iron frame from which hangs a golden padlock with a crossbar the thickness of a finger under which a lamp is burning and warming the bar. You will only be due for rain here when—the chicken's eaten all the rice, the dog's licked up all the flour and the lamp has melted the bar of the lock."

"No problem," said Pig, "no problem. If you take me with you, brother, I can do a transformation, eat all the rice and flour up in one sitting and snap the bar of the lock. I can guarantee rain."

"Don't talk nonsense, you idiot," said Monkey. "This is a plan that's been made by Heaven. You'll never be able to get there."

"From what you say I don't know what to do," said Sanzang.

"It's easy," said Monkey, "easy. As I was leaving the four heavenly teachers said to me that this could only be solved through goodness."

The marquis then prostrated himself on the ground again and said imploringly, "I will do just as you tell me, teacher."

"If your heart can turn back to goodness," Monkey replied, "I hope that you'll at once start invoking the Buddha and reciting scriptures. Then I'll be able to help you. If you persist in refusing to reform there'll be nothing I can do to get you off. It won't be long before Heaven executes you, and your life will be beyond saving."

The marquis kowtowed in worship, swearing to return to the faith. At once he summoned all the Buddhist and Taoist clergy in the city and ordered that a site be prepared for religious ceremonies. They were all to write out documents and memorials for three days. The marquis led his followers in burning incense and worshipping, thanking Heaven and Earth and repenting of his sins. Sanzang recited surras on his behalf. At the same time urgent notices were sent out ordering all the men and women, young and old, in all the households inside and outside the city to burn incense sticks and invoke the Buddha. From that moment on all ears were filled with virtuous sounds. Only then did Brother Monkey feel happy.

"You two look after the master," he said to Pig and Friar Sand, "while I go off for him again."

"Where are you going this time, brother?" Pig asked.

"The marquis really believed what I told him and is being reverent, good and kind," Monkey replied, "and he's sincerely invoking the Buddha's name. So I'm going back to submit another request for rain to the Jade Emperor."

"If you're going, don't lose any time, brother," said Friar Sand. "This is holding us up on our journey. But do get a fall of rain: it'll be another true achievement for us."

Chapter 87

The splendid Great Sage set his cloud off once more and went straight to the gate of Heaven, where he met Heavenly King Lokapala again.

"What have you come for now?" Lokapala asked.

"The marquis has mended his ways," Monkey replied, which pleased the Heavenly King. As they were talking the Straight Spell Messenger arrived at the gate of Heaven to deliver letters and documents written by Taoist and Buddhist clergy.

When he saw Monkey the messenger bowed and said, "This is all the result of your successful conversion, Great Sage."

"Where are you taking those letters?" Monkey asked.

"Straight to the Hall of Universal Brightness," the messenger replied, "to give to the heavenly teachers to pass on to the Great Heavenly Honoured One, the Jade Emperor."

"In that case you'd better go first and I'll follow," Monkey said. The messenger then went in through the heavenly gate. "Great Sage," said Heavenly King Lokapala, "there's no need for you to go to see the Jade Emperor. You should go to borrow some thunder gods from the Office of Response to the Primary in the Ninth Heaven, then set off thunder and lightning. After that there'll certainly be rain."

Monkey accepted this suggestion and went in through the gate of Heaven. Instead of going to the Hall of Miraculous Mist to ask for an edict he at once turned his cloud – treading steps towards the Office of Response to the Primary in the Ninth Heaven, where the Envoy of the Thunder Gate, the Corrector of Records and the Inspector of Probity appeared to bow and say, "Why are you here, Great Sage?"

"There's something I'd like to see the Heavenly Honoured One about," Monkey replied, and the three envoys passed this on in a memorial to the Heavenly Honoured One, who then came down from behind his screen of red clouds and nine phoenixes in full court dress.

When they had exchanged greetings Monkey said, "There is something I would like to request of you."

"What might that be?" the Heavenly Honoured One asked.

"While escorting the Tang Monk I have reached the prefecture of Fengxian," said Brother Monkey, "and as they have long been suffering from drought there I promised to make it rain for them. The reason I

have come here is to ask for the loan of some of your subordinate officials and generals in order to ask for rain."

"I am aware that three things have been set up because the marquis there offended Heaven," the Heavenly Honoured One replied, "but I have not yet heard that rain is due to fall there."

"When I went to ask the Jade Emperor for an edict yesterday," Monkey replied with a smile, "he told the heavenly teachers to take me to see the three things in the Hall of Fragrance: the mountain of rice, the mountain of flour and the golden lock. Rain isn't due to fall till these three things have been knocked down or broken. When I was feeling very upset because it was so difficult the heavenly teachers advised me to persuade the marquis and his people to do good deeds because Heaven is bound to help anyone who has a good thought. So there's a good chance of persuading Heaven to change its mind and delivering them from this disaster. Now good thoughts are happening everywhere, and all ears are filled with good sounds. Not long ago the Straight Spell Messenger took letters showing that they had mended their ways and turned towards goodness to the Jade Emperor, which is why I've come to your illustrious palace to ask for the help of your Chapter 87

thunder officials and thunder generals."

"In that case," the Heavenly Honoured One replied, "I'll send Deng, Xin, Zhang and Tao to take Mother Lightning and go with you to Fengxian Prefecture to make thunder, Great Sage."

Before long the four generals and the Great Sage had reached the boundaries of Fengxian and started performing their magic in mid air. A great ramble of thunder could be heard, and there were sizzling flashes of lightning. Indeed:

The lightning was like snakes of purple gold;

The thunder was like the noise of sleeping insects awakened.

Flashes of light like flying fire,

Thunderclaps like landslides in the mountains.

The jagged lines lit up the whole of the sky;

The great noise caused the earth itself to move.

When the red silk flashed like sprouts of plants

Rivers and mountains shook for three thousand miles.

Inside and outside the city of Fengxian nobody, whether an official high or how, a soldier or a civilian had heard thunder or seen lightning for three whole years; and now that the thunder was booming and the lightning flashing they all fell to their knees, put incense burners on their heads, held sprigs of willow in their hands and said, "We submit to Amitabha Buddha. We submit to Amitabha Buddha." These good thoughts had indeed moved Heaven, as is proved by an old－style poem:

When thoughts have been born in human minds

Heaven and earth will both be aware.

If evil and good do not get their due

Sides have been taken by powers up there.

We will for the moment leave the Great Sage Monkey directing the thunder generals as they unleashed thunder and lightning over Fengxian Prefecture, where everyone had turned back to goodness, and tell how the Straight Spell Messenger took the Taoist and Buddhist documents straight to the Hall of Universal Brightness, where the four heavenly teachers submitted them to the Jade Emperor in the Hall of Miraculous Chapter 87

Mist.

When the Jade Emperor had seen them he said, "As that wretch has had some virtuous thoughts, see what has happened to the three things." Just as he was speaking the official in charge of the Hall of Fragrance came in to report, "The rice and flour mountains have collapsed: the rice and flour all disappeared in an instant. The bar of the lock has also been broken."

Before he could finish submitting this memorial the heavenly official in attendance led in the local deity, the city god and the gods of the altars from Fengxian, who all bowed and reported, "The lord of our prefecture and every member of every household, high and low, of the people have been converted to the true achievement and are worshipping the Buddha and Heaven. We now beg you in your compassion to send a widespread fall of timely rain to deliver the common people."

When the Jade Emperor heard this he was very pleased, so he issued an edict: "Let the departments of wind, cloud and rain go to the lower world in accordance with orders. At this hour on this day the clouds are to be spread, the thunder shall roar, and three feet and forty – two drops of rain shall fall." At once the four heavenly teachers transmitted the edict to the weather departments, who were all to go to the lower world, show their powers and act together.

Monkey was enjoying himself up in the sky with Deng, Xin, Zhang and Tao, who were ordering Mother Lightning about, when the arrival of all other gods filled the sky with their assembly. As the wind and the clouds met, the timely rain began to pour down.

Thick, heavy clouds,

Lowering black mists,

The rumbling of the thunder cart,

The searing flash of lightning,

A roaring gale,

A torrential downpour.

Indeed, when one thought goes up to Heaven

Ten thousand hopes are all fulfilled.

Because the Great Sage has used his powers

The landscape is darkened for thousands of miles.

The wonderful rain falls like rivers and seas,

Hiding the country and heavens from sight.

Water comes pouring down the eaves,

Chapter 87

1225

Journey to the West

Noisily pounding outside the windows.

While every household invokes the Buddha

All of the streets and markets are flooded.

To East and West every channel is filled;

Winding streams meander to North and to South.

Dried – up shoots receive moisture,

Withered trees revive.

The hemp and wheat now flourish in the fields;

Beans and other grains grow in the countryside.

Traders happily travel to sell their wares;

Cheerful peasants get ready to work.

After this the millet will do well,

And the crops are bound to yield a bumper harvest.

When wind and rain are timely the people know content;

When rivers and seas are calm the world is at peace.

That day three feet and forty – two drops of rain fell, after which all the gods began to tidy up and go away.

"Gods of the four departments," yelled the Great Sage at the top of his

voice, "stay there for a moment with your cloud followers while I tell the marquis to bow to you all and express his thanks. You may part the clouds and appear in your true forms to let this mortal see you with his own eyes. That's the only way he'll believe and make offerings." When the gods heard this they all stayed where they were up in the clouds.

Monkey then brought his cloud down to land and went straight into the prefectural palace, where Sanzang, Pig and Friar Sand all greeted him. The marquis kowtowed to him in thanks at every pace he took.

"Stop thanking me," said Monkey. "I've asked the gods of the four departments to stay. Could you tell everyone to come here to kowtow and thank them so that they'll make it rain properly in future?" The marquis issued urgent orders summoning everyone to give thanks, and they all kowtowed with incense—sticks in their hands. The gods of the four departments——rain, thunder, cloud and wind——then parted the clouds and revealed themselves in their true form.

The dragon king appeared,

Chapter 87

1226

Journey to the West

The thunder generals were revealed,

The clouds boys were seen,

The lords of the wind came down.

The dragon king appeared:

With silver whiskers and an azure face he was really peerless.

The thunder generals were revealed

With their countenances of matchless might and crooked mouths.

The cloud boys were seen

Wearing gold crowns over faces like jade.

The lords of the wind came down

With flustered brows and bulging eyes.

All were displayed on the azure clouds

Drawn up in ranks with their holy countenances.

Only then were the people of Fengxian convinced

As they kowtowed, burned incense and rejected evil.

Today they gazed up at the heavenly generals,

Washing their hearts as they all turned to goodness.

The gods stood there for two hours as the people kowtowed to them endlessly. Monkey rose up into the clouds again to bow to all the gods and say, "I've put you to great trouble. All you gentlemen may now return.

I'll make everyone in this prefecture give pure and lofty offerings to thank you at the due season. From now on you gentlemen must send wind every five days and rain every ten days to help them out." The gods all consented as he told them and returned to their own departments.

Bringing his cloud down to land, Monkey said to Sanzang, "Now that the job's been done and the people given peace we can pack our things and be on our way again."

When the marquis heard this he hastened to bow and say, "How can you say such a thing, Lord Sun? What has happened today has been an infinitely great act of kindness. I have sent people to prepare a humble banquet to thank you for your great kindness. Then I will buy some land from the people to build a monastery for you, my lords, with a shrine to you with inscribed tablets where offerings can be made in all four seasons.

Even if I were to carve my own bones and heart it would be hard to repay a ten thousandth part of what I owe you. You can't possibly leave."

"What Your Excellency says is very fine," Sanzang replied, "but we are pilgrim monks who can only put up for the night on our journey West. We cannot stay here long. We definitely must leave in a day or two." The marquis refused to let them go, and he ordered many people to prepare a banquet and start building a monastery that very night.

The next day there was a magnificent banquet at which the Tang Priest took the place of honour while the Great Sage Monkey sat beside him with Pig and Friar Sand. The marquis and his officials high and low passed them cups of wine and dishes of food while fine music was played, and so they were entertained all day. It was a most happy occasion, and there is a poem to prove it: After long drought the fields received sweet rain;

Merchants were travelling along all watercourses.

They were deeply moved by the monks who had come to the city,

And by the Great Sage who had gone up to Heaven.

The three things had now been accomplished;

One thought had brought all back to the good.

From now on all longed for a new golden age

With ideal weather and good harvests for ever.

The banquets went on for days, as did the giving of thanks, until they had been kept there for almost half a month. All that remained to do was complete the monastery and the shrine. One day the marquis invited the four monks to go to inspect them.

"How did you complete so enormous a project so quickly?" asked the Tang Priest in astonishment.

"I pressed the laborers to work night and day without stopping and insisted most urgently that they finish quickly," the marquis replied. "Now I would like you gentlemen to come and inspect it."

"You certainly are a most good and able marquis," said Monkey with a smile. By now they had all reached the new monastery, where they were full of admiration for the towering halls and the majestic entrance. Monkey asked Sanzang to name the monastery.

"Very well," Sanzang said, "I name it the Monastery of Salvation by

Timely Rain."

"Splendid," said the marquis, "splendid." He then issued a golden invitation to monks from far and wide to come to burn incense there. To the left of the Buddha hall was a shrine to the four pilgrims at which offerings were to be made in each of the four seasons every year. Temples had also been built for the thunder gods and dragon gods to thank them for their divine efforts. When the visit was over Sanzang ordered an early departure.

Chapter 87

1228

Journey to the West

When the local people realized that the monks could be persuaded to stay no longer they all prepared parting gifts, none of which the travelers would accept. Then all the officials in the prefecture escorted them on their way for ten miles with a band playing and a great display of flags and canopies. Still loath to let the travelers go, the officials watched with tears in their eyes till they had disappeared from sight. Only then did the officials return to the city. Indeed:

The virtuous and holy monk left behind the Salvation Monastery; The Great Sage Equaling Heaven dispensed great kindness.

If you don't know how many more days after this departure it was that they finally saw the Tathagata Buddha, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 88

When the Dhyana Reaches Yuhua a Display of Magic Is Given

The Mind – Ape and the Mother of Wood Take Their Own Disciples

The story tells how after happily taking their leave of the marquis the Tang Priest turned to Monkey as he rode and said, "Worthy disciple, this good result was even better than rescuing the babies in Bhiksuland, and it was all your achievement."

"In Bhiksuland you only saved 1,111 little boys," said Friar Sand. "That's no comparison with this heavy, soaking rain that's saved tens of thousands of lives. I've been quietly admiring my big brother's magical powers that extend right up to the heavens, as well as his

mercy that covers the whole earth."

"Merciful and good our big brother may be," said Pig with a laugh, "but it's just a show of being kind. Inside he's a troublemaker. When he's with me he treats me like dirt."

"When have I ever treated you like dirt?" Monkey protested. "Often enough," replied Pig. "You're always seeing to it that I get tied up, hung up, boiled and steamed. After being so kind to all those tens of thousands of people in Fengxian you should have stayed there for half a year and let me have a few more good filling meals. Why did you have to be sending us on our way?"

When the venerable elder heard this he shouted, "You idiot! Can you think of nothing but your greed? Stop quarrelling and be on your way." Daring say no more, Pig thrust out his snout, shouldered the luggage, and followed the master and his fellow disciples along the road, laughing loudly.

Time moved as fast as a shuttle, and soon it was late autumn. What could be seen was, The end of ripples on the waters,

The mountains' bones looking lean.

Chapter 88

1229

Journey to the West

Red leaves fly around,

In the time of yellowing flowers.

Under the clear and frosty sky the nights seem longer;

The moon shines white through the windows.

Many the household fires in the evening light;

The water gleams cold all over the lake.

The clover fern is now white,

While knotweed blooms red.

Mandarins are green and oranges yellow;

Willows are withering and the millet is ripe.

Beside the desolate village wild geese land among the reeds;

Cocks call by the country inn while the beans are harvested.

When the four of them had been travelling for a long time they saw the towering shape of a city wall.

"Wukong," said Sanzang, waving his riding – crop, "you can see there's another city there. I wonder where it is."

"Neither of us have ever been here before," Monkey replied, "so how could I know? Let's go ahead and ask."

Before the words were out of his mouth an old man appeared from among some trees. He was leaning on a stick, lightly dressed with coconut sandals on his feet and had a sash round his waist. The Tang Priest hastily dismounted and went over to greet the old man.

Returning his greeting as he leaned on his stick, the old man asked, "Where are you from, reverend sir?"

"I am a poor monk sent by the Tang court in the East to worship the Buddha in the Thunder Monastery and fetch the scriptures," the Tang Priest replied, putting his hands together in front of his chest. "Now that I have come to this distinguished place I wonder which city it is that I can see in the distance, and I would ask you, venerable benefactor, to inform me."

When the old man heard this he replied, "Enlightened master of the dhyana, this humble place of ours is Yuhua County in one of the prefectures of India. The lord of our city is a member of the king of India's royal family who has been made prince of Yuhua. He is a very worthy prince who respects both Buddhist and Taoist clergy and cares deeply for the common people. If you go to see him he will certainly treat you with great respect." Sanzang thanked the old man, who went off through the woods.

Sanzang then turned back to tell his disciples what had happened. The three of them were happily going to help the master back on his horse when Sanzang said, "It's not far. There is no need to ride." The four of them Chapter 88

then walked to a street beside the city wall to take a look. This was an area where traders lived; it was crowded with people and business was good. The people looked and sounded no different from those of China. "Be careful, disciples," said Sanzang. "On no account must you act wild."

At that Pig bowed his head and Friar Sand covered his face, leaving only Monkey to support the master. On both sides of the road people were crowding in to look at them, shouting, "We only have eminent monks who subdue dragons and tigers here. We've never seen monks who subdue pigs and monkeys before." This was more than Pig could stand.

Thrusting his snout at them he said, "Have you ever seen a monk in all your life who subdued the king of the pigs?" This gave all the people in the street so bad a fright that they fell back on both sides of them stumbling and tripping over, trying to get away.

"Put that snout away at once, you idiot," said Monkey with a grin, "and don't try to make yourself look pretty.

Just pay attention while you're crossing the bridge." The idiot lowered his head and kept grinning. Once over the drawbridge they entered the city, where the main roads were bustling and prosperous with bars and houses of entertainment. It was indeed a city in a divine region, and there is a poem to prove it that goes, An eternally iron—strong city like splendid brocade,

Full of fresh color, lying next to a river near mountains,

Connected by boat with lakes for the movement of goods.

A thousand wine—shops await behind curtains.

Everywhere smoke rises from towering buildings;

Each morning the lanes are filled with the hubbub of traders.

The look of the city was much like Chang'an:

Cock—crows and the barking of dogs were all just the same.

"I have heard tell of the foreigners in the West," Sanzang thought with secret delight, "but I have never come here before. On close

examination it is no different from our Great Tang. This must be what is meant by paradise." When he learned that a bushel of hulled rice cost only four tenths of an ounce of silver and a pound of sesame oil only eight thousandths of an ounce of silver he realized that this truly was a place where crops grew in abundance.

After walking for quite a long time they reached the prince of Yuhua's palace. On either side of the palace gates were the office of the remembrancer, the law courts, the prince's kitchens and the government hostel.

"Disciples," said Sanzang, "here is the palace. Wait while I go inside for the prince to inspect our passport and let us on our way."

"We can't very well stand at the gates while you go in, Master," said Pig.

"Can you not see 'Government Hostel' written over that gateway?" Sanzang asked. "Go and sit there and see if you can buy some fodder for the horse. If the prince offers me a meal when I have my audience with him I will send for you to share it."

"Go on in, Master, and don't worry," said Brother Monkey. "I can cope." Friar Sand carried the luggage into the hostel, where the staff were so alarmed by their hideous faces that they did not dare ask them any questions or send them away but could only invite them to sit down.

Meanwhile the master changed his habit and hat and went straight into the prince's palace with the passport in his hands. Soon he was met by a protocol officer who asked, "Where are you from, reverend sir?"

"I am a monk sent by the Great Tang in the East to worship the Lord Buddha and fetch the scriptures in the Great Thunder Monastery," Sanzang replied. "Now that I have reached this distinguished place I would like to have my passport inspected and returned, which is why I have come to seek an audience with His Royal Highness." The protocol officer passed this on, and as the prince was indeed an enlightened one he sent for Sanzang at once.

Sanzang bowed in greeting before the prince's hall, and the prince invited him into the hall to sit down. When the prince read the passport that Sanzang handed him and saw the seals and signatures from so many countries on it he signed it himself, folded it up and put it on his table. "Venerable Teacher of the Nation," he said, "you have passed through many countries on your way here from Great Tang. How long has your journey taken?"

"I have kept no record of the distance," Sanzang said, "but some years ago the Boddhisattva Guanyin appeared to me and left an address in verse in which it was said that the road would be sixty thousand miles long. I have already seen fourteen winters and summers on my journey."

"That means fourteen years," the prince replied. "I should imagine that there were many delays along the way."

"It would be hard to tell of them all," said Sanzang. "There were thousands of monsters and I don't know how much suffering to be endured before I could reach here." The prince was so pleased with his visitor that he ordered his kitchens to prepare a vegetarian meal for him.

"I wish to inform Your Royal Highness that I have three disciples," Sanzang said. "As they are waiting outside I will not be able to delay our journey by accepting the meal." The prince then ordered his aides to go straight out to invite the venerable elder's three disciples into the palace to share the meal.

When the aides went out with this invitation they said, "We can't see them, we can't see them."

"There are three hideous monks sitting in the hostel," one of their staff said. "Must be them."

The aides and their staff then went to the hostel, where they asked the people in charge, "Which are the disciples of the monk from Great Tang who's going to fetch the scriptures? His Royal Highness has invited them to a meal."

As soon as Pig, who was sitting there snoozing, heard the word "meal" he could not help jumping up and saying, "We are, we are," at the sight of which the palace aides' souls flew from their bodies as they shivered and said, "A pig demon! A pig demon!"

When Monkey heard this he seized hold of Pig and said, "Act a bit

more civilized, brother, and don't be so wild." When the officials saw Monkey they all said, "A monkey spirit! A monkey spirit!"

Chapter 88

1232

Journey to the West

"There's no need to be frightened," said Friar Sand, raising his hands together in polite greeting. "We're all disciples of the Tang Priest."

"A stove god, a stove god," was the officials' reaction to the sight of him. Monkey then told Pig to lead the horse and Friar Sand to shoulder the carrying – pole as they followed the officials' staff into the prince of Yuhua's palace. The aides went ahead to announce them.

When the prince looked up and saw how ugly they were he too was frightened. "Do not be alarmed, Your Royal Highness," said Sanzang, putting his hands together in front of his chest. "Although my rough disciples are ugly they have good hearts."

Pig intoned a noise of respect and said, "How do you do?" This made the prince feel even more alarmed.

"All my rough disciples are from the wilds and the mountains and they do not know how to behave," Sanzang explained, "so please forgive them." Overcoming his fear, the prince told the superintendent of his kitchens to take the monks to eat in the Gauze Pavilion.

Sanzang thanked the prince, came down from the hall to proceed to the pavilion with his disciples, then grumbled at Pig, "You idiot," he said, "you've not a shred of manners. If you had kept your mouth shut that would have been fine, but why did you have to be so coarse? That one remark from you was enough to knock a mountain over."

"I did better by not making a respectful chant," said Monkey, "and I saved a bit of my breath too."

"You didn't even intone the chant properly," said Friar Sand to Pig. "First of all, you stuck your snout out and roared."

"It makes me hopping mad," said Pig. "The other day the master told me that the polite thing when I met someone was to say, 'How do you do?' I do it today and you tell me it's wrong. How do you want me to behave?"

"I told you to say, 'How do you do?' when you meet people," Sanzang replied, "but not to make such a fool of yourself when you meet a prince. As the saying goes, things, like people, come in grades. Why can't you see the differences of social rank?" While he was still making these remarks the superintendent of the kitchens led servants in to set out tables and chairs and serve the vegetarian feast. Then the monks stopped talking and started eating their meal.

When the prince withdrew from the palace hall to his living quarters his three sons noticed his pallor and asked, "What has given you such a fright today, Father?"

"A most remarkable monk has arrived," the prince replied. "He has been sent by the Great Tang in the East to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures, and he came to present his passport. When I invited him to take a meal he told me that he had some disciples outside the palace, so I asked them in. When they came in a moment later they didn't kowtow to me but just said, 'How do you do?' That was upsetting enough. Then when I looked at them I saw that they were all as ugly as demons, which gave me quite a shock. That's why I'm looking pale."

Now the three young princes were no ordinary boys. They were all fond of the martial arts, so they stretched out their hands, rolled up their sleeves and said, "They must be evil spirits from the mountains disguised as Chapter 88

humans. Wait while we fetch our weapons and take a look at them."

Splendid young princes! The eldest wielded a brow-high rod, the second a nine-toothed rake and the third a black-painted cudgel, and the three of them strode with great valour and spirit out of the palace, shouting,

"What's this about monks fetching scriptures? Where are they?"

"Young prince," replied the superintendent of the kitchens and the others on their knees, "they're eating in the Gauze Pavilion."

The young princes then charged straight in without stopping to think as they shouted, "Are you men or monsters? Tell us at once and we'll spare your lives."

This gave Sanzang such a fright that he turned pale, dropped his bowl, bowed to them and replied, "I have come from Great Tang to fetch the scriptures. I am a man, not a monster."

"You look human enough," the princes said, "but the three ugly ones are definitely monsters."

Pig kept eating and ignored them, while Friar Sand and Monkey bowed and said, "We're all human. Our faces may be ugly but our hearts are good, and despite our clumsy bodies we have good natures. Where are you three from, and why are you shooting your mouths off so wildly?"

"These three gentlemen are His Royal Highness's sons," explained the superintendent of the kitchens and the others who were standing at the side of the pavilion.

"Well, Your Highnesses," said Pig, throwing down his bowl, "what are you carrying those weapons for? Do you want a fight with us?"

The second prince strode forward wielding his rake in both hands to strike at Pig, which made him say with a chuckle, "That rake of yours is only fit to be the grandson of my one." With that he stripped down, pulled his own rake out from his belt and swung it, making ten thousand beams of golden light, then went through some movements, leaving a thousand strands of auspicious vapor. The second prince was so terrified that his hands went weak and his muscles turned numb and he lost the nerve for any more showing off.

When Monkey saw that the oldest of the young princes was leaping about with a brow-high rod he brought his own gold-banded cudgel out from his ear and shook it to make it as thick as a bowl and twelve or thirteen feet long. Ramming it into the ground, he made a hole about three feet deep in which it stood upright, then said with a smile, "I'm giving you this cudgel."

As soon as the prince heard this he threw his own rod down and went to take the cudgel, but though he pulled at it with all his strength he couldn't move it by as much as a hair's breath. Then he straightened himself up and shook it, but it was as if it had taken root. At this the third prince started acting wild, moving into the attack with his black-painted cudgel. Friar Sand dodged the blow, then brought out his own demon-quelling staff, and as he fingered it brilliant light and glowing, coloured clouds came from it, leaving the superintendent of the kitchens and the rest of them wide-eyed and speechless. The

three young princes then kowtowed, saying, "Divine teachers, divine teachers, we mere mortals failed to recognize you. We beg you to give us a display of your powers."

Monkey went up to them, effortlessly picked up his cudgel and said, "It's too cramped here for me to do my stuff. I'm jumping up into the auto play around and give you something to see."

Chapter 88

1234

Journey to the West

The splendid Great Sage went whistling up by somersault and stood on an auspicious cloud of many colours up in mid–air about three hundred feet above the ground. Then he moved up and down and spun to left and right as he performed a Canopy from Which Flowers Are Scattered and a Twisting Dragon with his gold–banded club. At first both he and the cudgel moved like flowers being added to brocade, but later he could no longer be seen as the whole sky was filled with the whirling cudgel.

As he roared his approval from down below Pig could not keep still, and with a great shout of "I'm going to have a bit of fun too!" the splendid idiot rode a breeze up into the air and started swinging his rake. He went three times up, four times down, five times to the left, six times to the right, seven times forwards and eight times backwards as he ran through all the movements he knew, filling the air with a noise like a howling gale.

Just when he had warmed up Friar Sand said to Sanzang, "Master, let me go up and give a show too."

Springing up into the air with both feet, the splendid monk whirled his club through the air, which glittered with golden light. Wielding his demon–subduing cudgel he performed a Red Phoenix Facing the Sun and a Hungry Tiger Seizing Its Prey, attacking hard and defending with time to spare as he turned for a sudden forward thrust. The three brother disciples all gave a most imposing display of their magical powers. This was indeed

An image of the dhyana, no common sight;

The causation of the Great Way filling all of space.

Metal and wood fill the dharma—world with their might;

A pinch of elixir produces perfect unity.

The quality of these magic warriors is often displayed;

The splendor of their weapons is widely revered.

Lofty though India is,

The princes of Yuhua now return to the central truth.

This all so terrified the three young princes that they fell to their knees in the dust; and all the staff in the Gauze Pavilion, high and low, together with the senior prince in his palace, all the soldiers, civilians, men and women, Buddhist monks and nuns, Taoist clergy, lay people——everyone in fact——all invoked the Buddha, kowtowed, held sticks of incense and worshipped. Indeed:

All the monks were converted at the sight of the true images,

Bringing blessings to mankind and the joys of peace.

From here the achievement was won on the road to enlightenment;

All joined in meditation and worshipped the Buddha.

When the three of them had given a display of their heroic powers they brought their auspicious clouds down to land, put their weapons away, joined their hands together in homage to the Tang Priest, thanked him and took their seats again.

The three young princes hurried back into the palace to report to their father, "A most wonderful thing has happened, Father. Today has been a tremendous success. Did you see the performance in the sky just now?"

"When I saw the coloured clouds glowing in the sky a little while back I, your mother and everyone else in the inner palace burned incense and worshipped," the prince, their father, replied. "I don't know where the gods or immortals who had gathered there were from."

"They weren't gods and immortals from somewhere else," the young princes said. "They were the three hideous disciples of the monk who's going to fetch the scriptures. One of them uses a gold–banded iron cudgel, one a nine–toothed take, and one a demon–quelling staff, all exactly the same as our three weapons.

When we asked them to give us a display they said it was too cramped down here to be able to manage, so they'd go up into the sky to give us a show. Then they all went up on clouds, filling the sky with auspicious clouds and vapors. They only came down a moment ago, and they're now sitting in the Gauze Pavilion. We are all very taken with them and we'd like to make them our teachers and learn their skills to protect the country with. This really will be an enormous achievement. I wonder what Your Majesty thinks." When the prince, their father, heard this he was convinced and agreed.

Father and sons then went straight to the Gauze Pavilion, going on foot instead of by carriage, and without any parasols. The four travelers had by now packed up their luggage and were just about to go to the palace to thank the prince for the meal and start out on their journey again when they saw the prince of Yuhua and his sons come into the pavilion and prostrate themselves before them. The venerable elder hurriedly rose and prostrated himself to return the courtesy, while Monkey and the rest of them moved aside with a hint of a mocking grin. When the kowtowing was over the four travelers were happy to go into the palace on being invited to do so and take seats of honour.

Then the senior prince got up and said, "Tang Master, there is one thing I would like to ask of you, but I do not know whether your three illustrious disciples will grant it."

"My disciples will obey any instruction that Your Royal Highness gives them," Sanzang replied.

"When I first saw you gentlemen," said the prince, "I took you for pilgrim monks from distant Tang, and because I am a mere mortal with fleshly eyes I treated you in a most offhand way. It was only when I saw Teacher Sun, Teacher Zhu and Teacher Sand whirling around in the sky that I realized you are immortals and Buddhas. My three wretched sons have been fond of the martial arts all their lives and they now wish most sincerely to be accepted as your disciples and learn some of your skills. I beg that in the greatness of your hearts you will agree to be the salvation of my boys. I will certainly reward you with all the wealth of the city."

When Brother Monkey heard this he could not restrain himself from replying with a chuckle, "You really don't understand, Your Royal Highness. As monks we'd love to have disciples, and your fine sons have their hearts set on goodness. But you mustn't talk about material benefits. As long as they can get on with us we'll Chapter 88

look after them." This delighted the prince, who ordered a great banquet in the main hall of the palace. It was amazing: no sooner had he issued his order than everything was there. This is what could be seen: Fluttering silken decorations,

Darkly fragrant incense smoke.

Gold – inlaid tables hung with knotted silks,

Dazzling the eyes;

Lacquered chairs with cushions of brocade,

Making them even more splendid.

Fresh fruit,

Fragrant tea.

Three or four courses of pure confectioneries,

One or two servings of rich and pure breadrolls.

The crisp steamed honeycakes were even finer;

The deep – fried sweets were truly delicious.

There were jugs of mild rice – wine,

Better than nectar when poured;

Servings of Yangxian tea that is fit for immortals,

More fragrant than cassia when held in the hands.

Every possible dish is provided;

All that is offered is outstanding.

Meanwhile there was singing, dancing, instrumental music, acrobatics and opera to entertain them. Master, disciples, the prince and his sons all had a day of delight, and after night fell unnoticed they dispersed. The princes then had beds and curtains set up in the pavilion and invited their teachers to turn in for the night; early the next morning they would piously burn incense and call on them again to ask them to teach their martial skills. These orders were obeyed, and hot, scented water was brought in for the travelers to bath in, after which everyone went to bed. At that time

Chapter 88

1237

Journey to the West

The birds perched high in the trees and all was silent;

The poet came down from his couch to end his chanting.

The light of the Milky Way now filled the sky,

And the grass grew thicker along the overgrown path.

The bang of a washing stick came from another courtyard;

The distant mountains and passes made one long for home.

The chirp of crickets expressed people's feelings,

Chirruping at the bedside interrupted one's dreams.

That describes the night. Early the next morning the prince and his three sons came to call on the venerable elder again. The previous day they had greeted each other with the etiquette appropriate to a prince, but today's greetings were those appropriate to teachers.

The three young princes kowtowed to Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand, then asked with bows, "Will you let your disciples have a look at your weapons, honoured teachers?" As soon as Pig heard this request he happily brought out his iron rake and threw it on the ground, while Friar Sand tossed his staff against the wall. The second and third young princes sprang to their feet to pick them up, but they might just as well have been dragonflies trying to shake a stone pillar: they both strained themselves till they were red in the face without moving the weapons in the slightest. When their elder brother saw this he said,

"Don't waste your efforts, brothers. Our teachers' weapons are all magical ones. Goodness only knows how heavy they are."

"My rake's not all that heavy," said Pig with a smile. "It only weighs a couple of tons——5,048 pounds including the handle."

The third prince then asked Friar Sand how heavy his staff was. "It's 5,048 pounds too," replied Friar Sand with a smile.

The oldest of the young princes then asked Brother Monkey to let him see the gold—banded cudgel. Monkey produced the needle from his ear, shook it in the wind to make it as thick as a rice bowl, and stood it upright in the ground in front of him, to the consternation and alarm of all the princes and officials. The three young princes then kowtowed again and said, "Teacher Zhu and Teacher Sand carry their weapons under their clothes where they can get them out. Why do you take yours out of your ear, Teacher Sun? How do you make it grow in the wind?"

"You wouldn't realize that this isn't some mere mortal object," Monkey replied.

"When chaos was first parted the iron was cast:

Yu the Great had the work done himself.

Chapter 88

1238

Journey to the West

When he unified the depths of rivers, lakes and seas

This cudgel served as a measuring rod.

In the prosperity after mountains and seas had been ordered

It floated to the gates of the Eastern Ocean.

Over the years it gave off a coloured glow,

Learned to shrink and to grow and shine with pure light.

It was my destiny to recover this rod

Which endlessly changes when I say the spell.

When I tell it to grow it fills the universe,

But it can be as tiny as a needle's eye.

It's known as As – You – Will and called gold – banded;

In Heaven and on Earth it is quite unique.

Its weight is thirteen thousand and five hundred pounds;

Whether thick or fine it can bring life or death.

Once it helped me make havoc in Heaven,

And took part when I attacked the Underworld.

It always succeeds in subduing dragons and tigers,

Everywhere wipes out monsters and ogres.

If it points up the sun goes dark;

Heaven, earth, gods, devils, all are afraid.

Passed on by magic since the birth of time,

This is no ordinary piece of iron."

When the young princes had heard this they all started kowtowing endlessly, bowing over and over again as they earnestly begged for instruction.

"Which fighting skills do the three of you want to learn?" Monkey asked.

"The one of us who uses a rod wants to learn that," the young princes replied, "the one who fights with a rake wants to learn the rake, and the staff man wants to learn the staff."

"Teaching would be easy enough," replied Monkey with a smile, "except that you're all too weak to be able to use our weapons, so you won't be able to master them. 'A badly – drawn tiger only looks like a

dog.' As they used to say in the old days, 'If the teaching isn't strict it shows the teacher is idle; if the student doesn't learn it's his own fault.' If you're really sincere you'd better burn incense and bow to Heaven and Earth. I'll give you some magic strength before teaching you how to fight."

The three young princes were very pleased to hear him say this, and they at once carried in an incense table themselves, washed their hands, lit incense sticks and bowed to Heaven. This done, they asked their teachers to instruct them.

Monkey stepped down and said to the Tang Priest with a bow, "Please forgive your disciple, honoured Master. Ever since in your goodness you rescued me at the Double Boundary Mountain and I became a Buddhist all those years ago we've been travelling West. Although I've never done very much to repay your kindness I have crossed plenty of rivers and mountains and done everything I possibly could. Now that we've come to this land of the Buddha and had the good fortune of meeting these three young princes, they've taken us as their teachers of martial arts. As our pupils they'd be your pupils' pupils, so I ask you respectfully, Master, to allow us to instruct them."

Sanzang was delighted, and when Pig and Friar Sand saw Monkey bowing to him they kowtowed too and said, "Master, we're stupid and too awkward with words to be able to explain things properly. Please take your dharma seat and let each of us take a pupil. It'll be fun, and something to remind us of our journey West."

Sanzang was happy to agree.

Monkey then took the three young princes into a quiet room behind the pavilion where he drew a star–chart of the Dipper and told them to prostrate themselves inside it while they shut their eyes and settled their spirits.

Meanwhile he silently said the words of the spell, recited a mantra, and blew magic breath into the hearts of the three of them. He put their primal spirits back into their original home, taught them magical spells, gave each of them immense strength, applied the right heat, and performed a magic that replaced their old bodies and bones with new ones. After the heat circulated in a roundabout way through their bodies the three young princes came to, stood up, rubbed their faces, summoned up their spirits, and all found that they were much stronger. The eldest of them could pick up the gold–banded cudgel, the second could swing the nine–toothed rake, and the third could

raise the demon – quelling staff.

When the king saw this he was beside himself with delight, and arranged another vegetarian feast for the Tang Priest and his three disciples. In front of the banquet each of the princes was taught his own skill: the one who was learning the rod practised with the rod, the one who was learning the rake practised with the rake, and the one who was learning the staff practised with the staff. Though the young princes did manage a few turns and movements it took a lot of effort, and going through a series of movements left them gasping for breath, so that they could not go on. Besides this, the weapons they were using had the power of transformation, so that as the princes advanced, retreated, attacked and lifted the weapons shrunk, grew and went through amazing changes by themselves. But the princes were, after all, only mortals, and were unable to keep up with the speed of their weapons. Later that day the banquet came to an end.

The next day the three princes came back once more to express their thanks and say, "We are very grateful to you, divine teachers, for giving us this strength, but when we try to spin your divine weapons around we can only move them with great difficulty. We would like to get smiths to make lighter copies of them, but we don't know whether you would agree to that, Teachers."

"Great, great," said Pig. "That's the way to talk. You ought to have your own made because you can't use our weapons, and anyhow we need them to protect the Dharma and beat monsters." The princes then sent for smiths who bought ten thousand pounds of iron and steel, set up a workshop with a furnace in the front courtyard of the prince's palace, and began to cast the weapons. On the first day the steel was made, and on the second Monkey and the other two were asked to bring out their gold – banded cudgel, nine – toothed rake and demon – quelling staff and put them under the matting shelter to be copied. The work went on by night and day without stopping.

These weapons were the treasures they always carried with them that they could not be parted from for a moment. Normally they hid them about their persons. Now the weapons were protected by coloured light, so that when they were put in the yard of the workshop for

several days many beams of radiance reached up to the heavens, while every kind of auspicious vapor blanketed the earth. That night an evil spirit, who was sitting out on a night watch in a cave called Tigermouth Cave on a mountain called Mount Leopard Head that was only some twenty – five miles from the city, noticed the glow and the auspicious vapors.

Going up on his cloud to investigate he saw that the light came from the city, whereupon he brought his cloud down and went closer for a better look. Discovering that the light was coming from the weapons, he thought with delight and desire, "What wonderful weapons, what splendid treasures. I wonder whose they are and why they've been left here. This must be my lucky chance. I'll take them, I'll take them." His covetousness now moved, he created a mighty wind, scooped up all three weapons and took them back to his cave. Indeed: Not for one moment must the Way be left;

What can be left is not the true Way.

Cultivation and trance will both be in vain

When divine arms have been taken away.

If you do not know how these weapons were found, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 89

The Tawny Lion Spirit Arranges a Rake Feast in Vain

Metal, Wood and Earth Make Havoc on Mount Leopard Head

The story tells how after days on end of hard work the smiths all went to sleep that night, only to get up at dawn to start again and find that the three weapons had disappeared from under the matting shelter.

Dumbfounded with horror, they started looking for them everywhere, and when the three young princes came out of the inner quarters to watch, the smiths all kowtowed to them and said, "Young masters, we don't know where the divine teachers' three weapons have all gone."

When the young princes heard this news they trembled and said, "We expect our masters put them away last night." Rushing to the Gauze Pavilion, they found the white horse still tethered in the walkway and could not help shouting, "Teachers, are you still asleep?"

"We're up," Friar Sand replied, and opened the door of their room to let the young princes in.

When they saw that the weapons were not there they asked with alarm, "Masters, have you put your weapons away?"

"No," replied Monkey, springing up.

"The three weapons disappeared during the night," the princes explained.

"Is my rake still there?" Pig asked as he scrambled to his feet.

"When we came out a moment ago we saw everyone searching for them," the princes replied. "When they couldn't find them we wondered if you had put them away, which is why we came to ask. As your treasures can shrink or grow we wonder if you've hidden them about yourselves to play a trick on us."

"Honestly, we haven't," said Monkey. "Let's all join the search."

When they went to the matting shelter in the yard and could see that there really was no sign of the weapons Pig said, "You smiths must have stolen them. Bring'em out at once. Do it right now or I'll kill you. I'll kill you, I say."

The smiths kowtowed desperately and said with tears pouring down their faces, "Your Lordships, we went to sleep last night because we'd been working so hard for days on end. When we got up this morning they'd gone. We're only ordinary mortals. We could never have moved them. Spare our lives, Your Lordships, spare our lives."

Monkey said with bitter regret, "It's our fault. After we'd shown them what they look like to copy we should have kept them on us instead of leaving them lying there. I suppose our treasures' glowing clouds and light must have alerted some monster who came and stole them during the night."

"Nonsense, brother," Pig replied. "This is a peaceful, orderly sort of place, not somewhere in the wilds or the mountains. No monsters

could possibly have come here. I'm sure it was those evil smiths who stole our weapons. They could tell they were treasures from the light shining from them. They must have left the palace last night and got a whole gang together to carry or drag them out. Bring'em here! I'm going to hit them." The smiths kowtowed and swore to their innocence for all they were worth.

Amid all this commotion the senior prince came out, and when he asked what had happened the color drained from his face too. After muttering to himself in a low voice for a while he said, "Divine teachers, your weapons were not mere mortals' ones. Even if there had been a hundred or more people they would never have been able to move them. Besides, my family has been ruling this city for five generations. I'm not boasting, but I do have a certain reputation for being a good man. The soldiers, civilians and artisans who live here fear my laws, and I am certain that they could never have had so wicked an idea. I hope that you divine teachers will think again."

"No need for any more thinking about it," replied Brother Monkey with a smile, "and no need to make the smiths suffer for what's not their fault. I would like to ask Your Royal Highness if there are any evil monsters in the mountains and forests around the city."

"That's a very good question," the prince replied. "There is a mountain North of the city called Mount Leopard Head, with a Tigermouth Cave in it. People often say that immortals, or tigers and wolves, or evil spirits live there. As I've never been there to find out the truth I am not sure what kind of creatures there are."

Chapter 89

1242

Journey to the West

"No need to say any more," replied Monkey with a laugh. "It must be someone wicked from there who knew they were treasures and came during the night to steal them. Pig, Friar Sand," he ordered, "stay here to guard the master and the city while I go for a look round." He then told the smiths to keep the furnace burning and carry on forging the new weapons.

The splendid Monkey King took his leave of Sanzang and whistled out of sight. Soon he was on Mount Leopard Head, which took him but an instant as it was only ten miles from the city. As he climbed to the summit to look around he saw that there was quite an air of evil about

it. Indeed, it was A long dragon chain of hills,

A mighty formation.

Sharp peaks thrusting into the sky,

Streams flowing fast along chasms deep.

In front of the mountain grow cushions of rare plants;

Behind the mountain strange flowers form brocade.

Tall pine and ancient cypress,

Old trees and find bamboo.

Crows and magpies sing as they fly,

Cranes call and gibbons scream.

Below the beetling scar

David's deer go in twos;

In front of the sheer rock－face

Are pairs of badgers and foxes.

Dragons from afar emerge briefly from the waters

Of the twisting, winding stream that runs deep under the ground.

This ridge runs right to the edge of Yuhua,

A place of beauty for a thousand ages.

Just as he was surveying the scene Monkey heard voices on the other side of the mountain, turned quickly round to look, and saw a couple of wolf－headed ogres climbing towards the Northwest and talking loudly as Chapter 89

they went.

"They must be monsters patrolling the mountain," Monkey guessed.

"I'm going to listen to what they have to say."

Making magic with his hands and saying the words of a spell Monkey shook himself, turned into a butterfly, spread his wings and fluttered after them. It was a very lifelike transformation: A pair of powdery wings,

Two silver antennae.

In the wind it files very fast;

In the sun it's a leisurely dancer.

It crosses rivers and walls in a flash.

Enjoys stealing fragrance and playing with catkins.

This delicate creature loves the taste of fresh flowers

It shows its beauty and elegance as it pleases.

He flew to a spot right above the evil spirits' heads, where he floated and listened to what they had to say.

"Brother," one of them shouted suddenly, "our chief keeps on striking it lucky. The other month he caught himself a real beauty to live with him in the cave, and he was as pleased as anything about that. Then last night he got the three weapons, which really are priceless treasures. Tomorrow there's going to be a Rake Banquet to celebrate, so we're all going to benefit."

"We've been quite lucky too," the other replied, "being given these twenty ounces of silver to buy pigs and sleep. When we get to Qianfang Market we can have a few jugs of wine to start with, and then fiddle the accounts to make ourselves two or three ounces of silver to buy ourselves padded jackets for the winter. It's great, isn't it?" As they laughed and talked the two monsters hurried along the main path at a great speed.

When Monkey heard about the banquet to celebrate the rake he was quietly delighted. He would have liked to kill the devils, but it was not their fault and, besides, he had no weapon. So he flew round till he was in front of them, turned back into himself and stood at a junction along the path. As the devils gradually came closer he blew a mouthful of magic saliva at them, recited the words *Om Humkara* and made a fixing spell that held the two wolf–headed spirits where they

were. Their eyes were fixed in a stare, they could not open their mouths, and they stood upright, both legs rigid. Monkey then knocked them over, undid their clothes and searched them, finding the twenty ounces of silver in a purse carried by one of them in the belt of his kilt.

Each of them was also carrying a white lacquered pass. One of these read "Wily Freak" and the other read

"Freaky Wile."

Having taken their silver and undone their passes the splendid Great Sage went straight back to the city, where he told the princes, the Tang Priest, the officials high and low and the smiths what had happened.

Chapter 89

1244

Journey to the West

"I reckon my treasure's the one that shone the brightest," said Pig with a grin. "That's why they're buying pigs and sheep for a slap–up meal to celebrate. But how are we going to get it back?"

"We'll all three of us go," said Monkey. "This silver was for buying pigs and sheep. We'll give it to the smiths: His Royal Highness can provide us with some animals. Pig, you turn yourself into Wily Freak, I'll turn into Freaky Wile, and Friar Sand can be a trader selling pigs and sheep. We'll go into Tigermouth Cave, and when it suits us we'll grab our weapons, kill all the monsters, come back here to pack up and be on our way again."

"Terrific," said Friar Sand. "No time to lose. Let's go." The senior prince agreed with the plan and told his steward to buy seven or eight pigs and four or five sheep.

The three of them left their master and gave a great display of their magic powers once outside the city.

"Brother," said Pig, "I've never seen that Wily Freak, so how can I possibly turn myself into his double?"

"I did fixing magic on him to keep him over there somewhere," Monkey said, "and he won't come round till tomorrow. I can

remember what he looks like, so you stand still while I tell you how to change. Yes, like this...no, a bit more like that....That's it. That's him."

While the idiot said an incantation Brother Monkey blew on him with magic breath, turned him into Wily Freak's double and gave him a white pass to tuck in at his waist. Monkey then turned himself into Freaky Wile with a pass at his waist too, and Friar Sand made himself look like a travelling dealer in pigs and sheep. Then they drove the pigs and sheep together along the path West towards the mountain. Before long they were in a mountain gully, where they met another junior devil. He had the most horrible face. Just look: A pair of round and bulging eyes

Shining like lanterns;

A head of red and bristly hair,

Blazing like fire.

A red nose,

A twisted mouth,

Sharp and pointy fangs;

Protruding ears,

A brow that seemed hacked into shape,

And a green and bloated face.

He was wearing a pale yellow tunic

And sandals made of sedge.

Chapter 89

1245

Journey to the West

He looked most imposing, like some evil god,

As he hurried along like a vicious demon.

This devil was carrying a coloured lacquer invitation box under his left arm as he greeted Monkey and the other two with a call of "Freaky

Wile, good to see you both. Did you buy us some pigs and sheep?"

"Can't you see we're driving them along?" Monkey replied.

"Who's this gentleman?" the devil asked, looking at Friar Sand.

"He's the dealer in pigs and sheep," Monkey replied. "We still owe him a couple of ounces of silver, so we're taking him home with us to fetch it. Where are you going?"

"To Bamboo Mountain to invite His Senior Majesty to the feast tomorrow morning," the devil said.

Taking his cue from the devil's tone of voice, Monkey then asked, "How many guests will there be altogether?"

"His Senior Majesty will take the place of honour," the devil replied, "and with our own king, chiefs and the rest of them there'll be over forty."

As they were talking Pig called, "Get a move on! The pigs and sheep are going everywhere."

"You go and invite them while I get a look at that invitation," Monkey said, and as the devil regarded him as one of their own kind he opened the box, took out the invitation and handed it to Monkey. This is what Monkey read when he unfolded it:

A banquet is being given tomorrow morning to celebrate the capture of the rake, and if you will condescend to cross the mountain, honoured ancestor, Primal Sage of Ninefold Numinosity, I will be deeply grateful.

With a hundred kowtows,

Your grandson,

Tawny Lion

When Monkey had read it he handed it back to the devil, who returned it to its case and carried on towards the Southeast.

"Brother," Friar Sand asked, "what did it say on the invitation?"

"It was an invitation to the Rake Banquet," Monkey replied. "It was signed, 'with a hundred kowtows, your grandson Tawny Lion,' and the invitation was being sent to the Primal Sage of Ninefold Numinosity.'"

"Tawny Lion must be a golden—haired lion who's become a spirit," said Friar Sand with a smile, "but I wonder who the Primal Sage of Ninefold Numinosity is."

Pig's reaction was to laugh and say, "He's mine."

"Why should he necessarily be yours?" Monkey asked.

"There's an old saying that goes, 'a mangy old sow can put a golden lion to flight,'" Pig replied. "That's why I know he's mine." As they talked and laughed the three of them drove the pigs and sheep along till they could see the gates of Tigermouth Cave. Outside the gates there were, Green mountains all around,

Ranges forming a mighty wall.

Creepers clung to the sheer rock faces,

Thorns hung down from the towering cliffs.

Bird song came from all around the woods,

While flowers gave a welcome by the entrance.

This cave was a match for the Peach Blossom Spring,

A place to avoid the troubles of the world.

As they came closer to the mouth of the cave they saw a crowd of evil spirits of every age and kind playing under the blossoming trees, and when they heard Pig's shouts of "Hey! Hey!" as he drove the pigs and sheep they all came out to meet them. The pigs and sheep were caught and trussed up. The noise had by now disturbed the demon king inside, who came out with ten or more junior demons to ask, "Are you two back?

How many animals did you buy?"

"Eight pigs and seven sheep— —fifteen altogether," Monkey replied. "The pigs cost sixteen ounces of silver and the sheep nine. We were only given twenty ounces, so we still owe five. This is the dealer who's

come with us for the silver."

"Fetch five ounces of silver, little ones," the demon king ordered on hearing this, "and send him on his way."

"But the dealer hasn't only come to get his silver," Monkey replied. "He's come to see the banquet too."

"What nerve, Freaky Wile!" said the furious demon abusively. "You were sent off to buy things, not to talk about banquets."

"As you've got those amazingly fine treasures, my lord," Pig said, stepping forward, "what's the harm in letting him have a look?"

Chapter 89

1247

Journey to the West

"Damn you too, Wily Freak," said the demon with an angry snort. "I got these treasures from inside the city of Yuhua. If this stranger sees them and talks about them in the city the word will get around and the prince will come to demand them. What'll we do then?"

"My lord," Monkey replied, "this dealer comes from the other side of Qianfang Market. That's a long way from the city, and he's not a city man either, so where would he go telling tales? Besides, he's hungry, and the two of us haven't eaten. If there's any food and liquor in the place why don't we give him some before sending him on his way?"

Before he could finish speaking a junior devil came out with five ounces of silver that he gave to Monkey, who in turn handed it to Friar Sand with the words, "Take your silver, stranger, then come round to the back for something to eat with us."

Taking his courage in his hands, Friar Sand went into the cave with Pig and Monkey. When they reached the second hall inside they saw on a table in the middle of it the nine–toothed iron rake set up in all its dazzling brightness to receive offerings. At the Eastern end of the table was leant the gold–banded cudgel, and at the Western end the demon–quelling staff.

"Stranger," said the demon king who was following them in, "that's the rake shining so brightly in the middle.

You're welcome to look, but don't tell anyone about it, whatever you do." Friar Sand nodded in admiration.

Oh dear! This was a case of "when the owner sees what's his he's bound to pick it up." Pig had always been a rough customer, and once he saw his rake he was not going to talk about the facts of the case, but charged over, pulled it down and swung it around as he turned back into himself. He struck straight at the evil spirit's face, not caring now about the proper ways of using his weapon. Monkey and Friar Sand each rushed to one end of the table to grab his own weapon and turn back into himself. As the three brothers started lashing out wildly the demon king had to get out of their way in a hurry, go round to the back and fetch his four – bright halberd with its long handle and sharp, pointed butt.

Rushing into the courtyard, he used this to hold off the three weapons and shout at the top of his voice, "Who do you think you are, tricking me out of my treasures by impersonation?"

"I'll get you, you hairy beast," Monkey cursed back. "You don't know who I am. I'm a disciple of Tang Sanzang, the holy monk from the East. When we came to Yuhua to present our passport the prince told his three sons to take us as their teachers of fighting skills. They were having weapons copied from ours. That was why ours were left in the courtyard for you to sneak into the city and steal in the middle of the night. And you accuse us of tricking them out of you by impersonation! Stay right there and try a taste of our three weapons."

The evil spirit at once raised his halberd to fight back. They fought from the courtyard out through the front gate, three monks chasing a single demon. It was a splendid battle: The cudgel whistled like the wind,

The rake's blows came raining down.

The demon – quelling staff filled the sky with glowing mist;

The four – bright halberd gave off clouds.

Chapter 89

1248

Journey to the West

They were like the three immortals refining elixir,

Making dazzling light that frightened gods and ghosts.

Monkey was brilliant at displaying his might;

The evil spirit was wrong to have stolen the treasures.

Marshal Tian Peng showed off his divine powers,

While the great general Sand was heroic and splendid.

As the three brothers fought with skill and one mind

A great battle took place in Tigermouth Cave.

The ogre was full of power and cunning,

A fit match for the four heroes.

They fought until the sun set in the West,

When the demon weakened and could hold out no longer.

After their long fight on Mount Leopard Head the evil spirit shouted at Friar Sand, "Watch this halberd!" As Friar Sand fell back to dodge the blow the evil spirit escaped through the opening he left and fled by wind to the Xun quarter to the Southeast.

Pig started rushing after him to catch him, but Monkey said, "Let him go. As the old saying goes, 'never chase a desperate robber.' Let's leave him nothing to come back to."

Pig agreed, and the three of them went back to the entrance of the cave, where they killed all the hundred and more evil spirits great and small. It turned out that they were all really tigers, wolves, tiger cats, leopards, red deer and goats. Monkey used one of his powers to bring all the valuables and fabrics, as well as the bodies of all the animals they had killed, the pigs and the sheep out of the cave. Friar Sand used some dry wood he found to start a fire that Pig fanned with both his ears. The cave was soon burnt out, and they took what they had brought with them back to the city.

The city gates were wide open; people had not yet gone to bed. The senior prince and his sons were still waiting in the Gauze Pavilion. The three disciples dropped all the dead wild animals and sheep as well as the valuables with loud thumps into the courtyard, filling it up as they called out, "Master, we're back. We've won."

The senior prince then expressed his thanks to them, the Tang priest was delighted, and the three young princes fell to their knees to bow.

"Don't thank us," Friar Sand said, helping them to their feet. "Come and see what we've got."

"Where are they from?" the senior prince asked.

Chapter 89

1249

Journey to the West

"The tigers, wolves, tiger cats, leopards, red deer and goats were all monsters that made themselves into spirits. When we'd got our weapons back we fought our way out through the gates. Their demon king is a golden–haired lion who fights with a four–bright halberd. He battled it out with us till nightfall, then ran away to the Southeast. Instead of chasing him we made sure he'd have nowhere to come back to by killing all these devils and bringing back all his things."

This news both delighted and alarmed the senior prince: he was delighted at their triumphant return; worried that the demon would seek his revenge later.

"Don't worry, Your Royal Highness," said Monkey. "I've thought about it very carefully, and I'll deal with it properly. I promise to exterminate the demons completely before we go. We'll definitely not leave you with trouble that'll come back later. When we went there at noon we ran into a little green–faced, red–haired devil who was carrying an invitation. What it said on it was: 'A banquet is being given tomorrow morning to celebrate the capture of the rake, and if you will condescend to cross the mountain, honoured ancestor, Primal Sage of Ninefold Numinosity, I will be deeply grateful.' It was signed: 'with a hundred kowtows, your grandson, Tawny Lion'. When the evil spirit was defeated just now he must have gone to have a word with his grandfather. They're bound to come looking for us to get their revenge tomorrow morning, and when that happens I'll wipe them all out for you." The senior prince thanked him and had supper arranged. When master and disciples had eaten, everybody went to bed.

The story now tells of how the evil spirit really did head Southeast to Bamboo Mountain, in which there was a cave called the Nine–bend Twisty Cave where the evil spirit's grandfather, the Primal Sage of Ninefold Numinosity, lived. That night the demon did not stop

treading the wind until he reached the cave's entrance in the last watch.

When he knocked on the gates and went in a junior devil greeted him with the words, "Your Majesty, Greenface brought the invitation last night, and the old gentleman invited him to say till this morning to go to your Rake Banquet with him. Why have you come here so very early to invite him yourself?"

"I hate to have to say it," the evil spirit replied, "but the banquet is off."

As they were talking Greenface came out from the inner part of the cave to say, "What are you doing here, Your Majesty? As soon as His Senior Majesty's up he's coming to the celebration with me." The evil spirit was so distraught that he could say nothing, but only wave his hands.

A little later the old demon got up and called for the evil spirit, who dropped his weapon and prostrated himself on the ground to kowtow, tears streaming down his cheeks. "Worthy grandson," the old demon said,

"you sent me an invitation yesterday, and this morning I'm on my way to the celebration. So why have you come yourself, looking so miserable and upset?"

"I was taking a stroll in the moonlight the night before last," the evil spirit replied, still kowtowing, "when I saw a dazzling light rising up to the sky from the city of Yuhua. I hurried there to take a look and saw that it came from three weapons in the prince's palace: a nine－toothed rake with gold in it, a staff and a gold－banded cudgel. I used my magic to take them away and decided to have a Rake Banquet to celebrate. I sent some of my underlings to buy pigs, sheep and fruit for the feast that I invited you to come and enjoy, Grandfather. But after I sent Greenface over with the invitation yesterday Wily Freak and the other one who'd been told to buy pigs and sheep came back with a dealer, a stranger, for some silver. The stranger was all set on seeing the banquet. I refused as I was afraid he'd spread the news around. Then they said they were hungry and asked for some food to eat, so I told them to go round the back to eat. When they got inside and saw the weapons they Chapter 89

said they were theirs. They each snatched one and turned back into their real selves. One was a monk with a hairy face and a mouth like a thunder god's, one was a monk with a long snout and big ears, and one was a monk with a really sinister face. The three of them yelled at me and started lashing out: they didn't care at all.

I just managed to fetch my four–bright halberd and come out to hold them at bay. When I asked them who they were and how they dared go in for impersonation they told me they were disciples of the Tang Priest who's been sent to the Western Heaven by Great Tang in the East. When they went to present their passport on their way through the city the princes pressed them to stay and teach them martial arts. They said their three weapons had been left in the palace yard for copies of them to be made, and that I'd stolen them. Then they went for me with great fury. I didn't know what those three monks are called, but they're all very good fighters. As I was no match for them by myself I had to run away and come here. If you have any love for your grandson I beg you to lend me your arms in order to get my revenge on those monks."

After a moment's silent thought the old demon replied with a smile, "So it's them. Worthy grandson, you made a big mistake provoking him."

"Do you know who they are, grandfather?" the other asked.

"The one with a long snout and big ears is Zhu Bajie," the old demon said, "and the one with a horrible face is Friar Sand. They're not too bad. But the one with a hairy face and a mouth like a thunder god is called Sun the Novice. He's got really tremendous magical powers. When he made great havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago a hundred thousand heavenly troops couldn't catch him. And he's a most determined hunter. He's like a policeman who'll search mountains and seas, smash caves, storm cities and cause all sorts of trouble. Why did you have to provoke him? Never mind. I'll go with you and capture those so–and–sos and the prince of Yuhua to avenge you."

On hearing this the evil spirit kowtowed again in thanks. The senior demon immediately mustered his grandsons Monkey Lion, Snowy Lion, Leo, Gryphon, Raccoon–dog Lion and Elephant–fighter, each of whom carried a sharp weapon. With Tawny Lion leading the way each of them set off a powerful gale that carried them straight to Mount Leopard Head, where there was an all–pervasive smell of smoke and fire and all that could be heard was sobbing. When they looked more closely they saw Wily Freak and Freaky Wile weeping for

their lord.

"Are you the real Freak and Wile or impostors?" the evil spirit shouted as he went up to them.

Falling to their knees and kowtowing with tears in their eyes, the two devils replied, "We're no impostors.

After we were given the silver to buy pigs and sheep yesterday we met a monk with a hairy face and a mouth like a thunder god in the wide valley to the West of the mountain. When he spat on us our legs went all weak, our mouths went stiff, we couldn't speak and we couldn't move. He knocked us over, found and stole our silver and took our passes off us. We were left in a daze till we came round just now. When we got home we found the place still on fire and all the buildings burnt down. We were crying so bitterly because you, my lord, and all the chiefs had disappeared. We don't know how the fire was started."

When the evil spirit heard this he could not stop his tears from gushing forth as he stamped his feet in fury, let loose heaven–shaking roars and exclaimed in hatred and fury, "Damned baldies! Vicious beasts! How could you be so evil? You've destroyed my cave palace and burnt my beauty to death. You've killed everyone, young and old, in the household. I'm so angry I could die!"

The old demon then told Monkey Lion to take hold of Tawny Lion, saying, "Grandson, what's done is done.

Upsetting yourself won't do you any good. What you must do now is summon up all your energy to catch those monks in the city."

Chapter 89

1251

Journey to the West

The evil spirit was still crying as he replied, "Grandfather, this mountain palace of mine wasn't built in a day.

Now those damned baldies have destroyed everything! My life's not worth living!" With that he broke free and flung himself forward to smash his head against the rock–face, only stopping after Snowy Lion and Monkey Lion had made great efforts to calm him. They then left the cave and all headed for the city.

With a roaring wind and in a thick fog they approached the city, so frightening all the people living outside the city wall that they abandoned their belongings and dragged or carried their children with them as they fled into the city. Once the people were all inside the gates were shut. A report was then made to the palace that a disaster was upon them. When the prince, who was taking a vegetarian breakfast in the Gauze Pavilion with the Tang Priest and the others, heard this report he went out to ask about it:

"A whole crowd of evil spirits are heading for the city with sandstorms, flying stones, fogs and wind."

"Whatever shall we do?" asked the prince, deeply alarmed.

"All stop worrying," said Brother Monkey, "all stop worrying. It's the evil spirit from Tigermouth Cave who ran away when he was beaten yesterday. He went to the Southeast to gang up with the Primal Sage of Ninefold Numinosity or whatever he's called and now he's here. We brothers are going out. Tell them to shut all the city gates, and send men to hold the city wall." The prince ordered that the city gates be shut, sent men to the wall, and went with his sons and the Tang Priest to inspect. The army's banners blotted out the sun, and the cannon fire reached the sky as Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand left the city amid wind and clouds to give battle. Indeed:

Because they were careless the weapons were lost,

Which led to attacks by the devilish host.

If you do not know the outcome of the battle listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 90

By Giving and Receiving the Master and the Lion Turn into One

After Stealing the Way and Obstructing Dhyana Ninefold Numinosity Is Pacified The story tells how the Great Sage Sun left the city with Pig and Friar Sand and looked the monsters in the face to see that they were all lions of various kinds. The Tawny Lion Spirit was leading, with Leo and Elephant—fighter Lion on his left, Gryphon and Raccoon—dog Lion on his right and Monkey Lion with Snowy Lion behind him. In the middle of them all was a nine—headed lion. The ogre Greenface was holding a canopy of brocade embroidered with flowers just behind the nine—headed lion; while Wily Freak and Freaky Wile carried a pair of red flags. They were all drawn up at a hollow place.

In his rough way Pig went up to them to shout abusively, "Ogres! Thieves! Treasure – stealers! What did you go there and gang up with that hairy lot for?"

To this the Tawny Lion Spirit retorted, gnashing his teeth in fury, "Vicious baldies! When I was alone Chapter 90

yesterday the three of you beat me and I had to run away. You should have done right, instead of burning my cave palace, destroying my mountain home and murdering my family. My hatred for you is as great as the ocean. Stay where you are and take this from my halberd!"

The splendid Pig raised his rake to parry the blow. When the two of them had just started fighting and neither was yet coming out on top Monkey Lion joined in, swinging his spiked iron club, as did Snowy Lion with his three – edged mace.

"Welcome," shouted Pig. Watch him as he charges straight forward to meet their onslaught and fight with them all. Friar Sand quickly pulled his demon – quelling staff out from where he was at the side and hurried forward to help Pig, at which Leo Spirit, Gryphon Spirit, Elephant – fighter Spirit and Raccoon – dog Spirit all piled in. The Great Sage Monkey held the evil spirits at bay with his gold – banded cudgel. Leo fought with a club, Snowy with a bronze hammer, Elephant – fighter with a steel spear and Raccoon – dog with a battleaxe.

The fight between the seven lion spirits and the three ferocious monks was a splendid one: Club, hammer, spear, axe and three – edged mace,

Spiked club, ball – staff and four – bright halberd:

Seven lions with seven deadly weapons,

Shouting their war cries as they surround three monks.

Powerful was the Great Sage's gold – banded cudgel;

Friar Sand's staff was almost matchless in the world.

Pig moved around with the power of a whirlwind

As his flashing rake gave off baleful light.

All, displaying their might, blocked before and behind,

Held off the onslaughts with daring and courage.

From the walls of the city the prince lent support,

Where his soldiers felt braver as they beat drums and gongs.

Throwing and thrusting, all showed off their magic,

Turning heaven and earth both dark and upside – down.

After the evil spirits had been fighting the Great Sage and the two others for half a day, night fell. Pig by now was dribbling and his legs were going weak, so he feinted with his rake and fled in defeat.

Chapter 90

1253

Journey to the West

"Where do you think you're going?" Snowy Lion and Monkey Lion shouted. "Take this!"

The idiot could not dodge them, and he took a heavy blow from the mace on his spine that laid him flat on the ground crying out, "I'm done for, I'm done for!"

The two lion spirits grabbed Pig by the bristles on his neck and by his tail and carried him over to see the nine – headed lion, "Grandfather," they reported, "we've caught one of them."

Before the words were out of their mouths Friar Sand and Monkey also had to fall back, beaten. When the evil spirits all came after them Monkey pulled out a handful of hairs, chewed them to pieces, spat them out, shouted, "Change!" and turned them into more than one hundred little Monkeys who went round and round, surrounding Snowy, Leo, Elephant – fighter, Raccoon – dog and Tawny Lion. Friar Sand and Monkey then came forward to join in the fight again. Later that night they caught Leo and Gryphon and put Raccoon – dog and Elephant – fighter to flight.

When Tawny Lion reported to the old demon that two of the lions had been lost the demon ordered, "Tie Pig up but don't kill him. When

they give our lions back we'll return Pig to them. If they're stupid enough to kill them we'll make Pig pay with his life." That evening all the fiends slept outside the city.

The story now turns to the Great Sage Sun, who carried the two lion spirits to beside the city wall, from where the senior prince saw him and ordered that the gates be opened. Twenty or thirty officers were sent out with rope to tie the lion spirits up and carry them into the city. The Great Sage then put his magic hairs away and went straight with Friar Sand to the wall tower, where he saw the Tang Priest.

"This is a terrible business," the Tang Priest said. "Is Wuneng still alive?"

"No problem," Brother Monkey replied. "As we've captured a couple of the evil spirits they won't possibly dare harm him. Have them tied up tight. I'll swap them for Pig tomorrow morning."

The three young princes then kowtowed to Monkey and said, "When you were fighting them at first you were by yourself, Teacher. Then when you pretended to run away and came back again there were over a hundred of you. How was that done? When you came back to the city wall after capturing the evil spirits there was only one of you again. What magical powers did you use to do that?"

"I have 84,000 hairs on my body," Monkey replied. "Each of them can become ten, and the ten become a hundred, so I can do millions and millions of transformations. It's extra body magic." The princes all kowtowed as a vegetarian feast was brought to the tower for them. All along the battlements lanterns and banners were displayed. There was the sound of clappers, bells, gongs and drums as the watches were changed, arrows passed on, cannons fired and warcries shouted.

Soon it was dawn, and the old demon sent for Tawny Lion Spirit to make a plan of action: "You must all use your wits to capture Sun the Novice and Friar Sand while I make a secret flight up onto the wall to capture their master, the old prince and his sons. I'll take them back to the Nine–bend Twisty Cave and wait for you to come back in triumph."

Accepting this plan, Tawny Lion took Monkey Lion, Snowy Lion, Elephant–fighter and Raccoon–dog back to beside the city wall, all carrying their weapons and demanding battle amid winds and fog.

Chapter 90

On the other side Monkey and Friar Sand jumped on the wall, where Monkey yelled abusively at the top of his voice, "Thieving damned ogres! Give me my brother Pig back this moment and I'll spare your lives. If you don't I'll smash your bones to powder and chop you all into little pieces." With no further argument the evil spirits all charged into the attack. The Great Sage and Friar Sand had to use skill and cunning to hold the five lions at bay. This fight was very different from the one on the previous day.

As an evil wind howled across the land

Black fog blotted out the sky.

Moving stones and flying sands alarmed both gods and demons;

As the trees in the forest fell the tigers and wolves were afraid.

Fierce was the spear of steel and bright the axe,

Merciless the rod, the halberd and the brazen hammer.

They wished they could swallow Monkey up whole,

And capture Friar Sand live and kicking.

The Great Sage's As – You – Will cudgel

Could attack and defend with miraculous effect.

Friar Sand's demon – quelling staff

Had won its fame outside the Hall of Miraculous Mist.

Now that it moved with its magical powers,

It would achieve glory in the West by wiping out demons.

While the five lion spirits with coats of different colours were fighting really well with Monkey and Friar Sand the old demon flew on a black cloud straight to the wall tower, where he shook his heads, which gave the military and civil officials, Sanzang, the senior prince and the soldiers guarding the wall such a fright that they all fell off. The demon then charged into the tower, opened his mouths, took Sanzang,

the senior prince and his sons in them one by one, and went back to the hollow ground, where he took Pig in another mouth, one of the nine he had in his nine heads. One mouth held the Tang Priest, one Pig, one the senior prince, one his eldest son, one the second son and one the third son.

With six mouths full of six people he still had three mouths empty and wide open as he roared, "I'm going back ahead." The five junior lion spirits all fought more bravely than ever now that they had seen their grandfather's triumph.

Chapter 90

1255

Journey to the West

As soon as Monkey heard the yells from the wall and realized he had fallen for a trick, he gave Friar Sand a quick shout to be careful then pulled all the hairs off his arms, put them in his mouth, chewed them up and spat them out as well over a thousand little Monkeys who swarmed into the attack. They knocked Monkey Lion over, took Snowy alive, captured Elephant–fighter, laid Raccoon–dog Lion low and killed Tawny Lion; but as they returned to the city wall with a great hubbub they let Greenface, Wily Freak and Freaky Wile escape. When the officers on the wall saw what had happened they opened the gates, tied up the five lion spirits with ropes and carried them into the city.

But before they could deal with them the princess appeared, sobbing and weeping, to say, "Holy teachers, His Royal Highness the prince, our sons and your master are all dead. How ever is this isolated city to survive?"

Putting his magic hairs away, Monkey bowed to her and said, "Don't upset yourself, Princess. It was only because I'd captured seven of his lion spirits that the old demon carried off my master, His Royal Highness and your sons with catching magic. I'm certain they'll come to no harm. My brother–disciple and I will go to his mountain first thing tomorrow morning, and I can guarantee that we'll catch the old demon and bring your four princes back to you."

When the princess and her womenfolk heard this they all bowed to Monkey and said, "We pray that His Royal Highness and his sons will all be safe and that our dynasty will be secure." When their bowing was done the womenfolk all returned to the palace in tears.

"Skin the Tawny Lion spirit we killed," Brother Monkey instructed the officials, "and have the five who are still alive securely tied up and put under lock and key. Bring us some vegetarian food to eat before we go to sleep. Stop worrying: I promise nothing will go wrong."

The next morning the Great Sage took Friar Sand up on an auspicious cloud. Before long they were at the top of Bamboo Mountain, and as they brought their cloud down to look they saw that it was magnificent: Rows of jutting peaks,

Sheer and craggy ridges.

In the deep gill waters gently flow;

Flowers weave a fragrant brocade before the beetling cliff,

Where the ridges twist and double back,

Encircled by the ancient winding paths.

When the crane comes the pine has a companion,

And the rock is left alone as the cloud drifts away.

The black ape heads for brightness when looking for fruit;

The deer rejoice in the warming sun as they search for flowers.

The green phoenix sings sweetly

And the golden bird's melodies never stop.

In spring the peach blossom contends with the plum;

In summer the willow and locust trees are rivals.

In autumn are carpets of chrysanthemums,

And in winter the snow flies all around.

Here there is beauty throughout the year,

Where the scenery can compare with Yingzhou's magic land.

As the two of them were standing on the mountain admiring the view Greenface suddenly appeared in a ravine between cliffs. He was holding a short cudgel. "Where do you think you're going?" Monkey shouted.

"I'm here."

This gave the young devil such a fright that he went running and tumbling down the ravine. Monkey and Friar Sand went straight after him but could find no sign of where he had gone. When they went further and searched around they found a cave palace with double gates of mottled stone that were firmly closed. Above the gates a stone tablet was set on which was written in large block letters: NINE −BEND TWISTY CAVE,

MIGHTY BAMBOO MOUNTAIN

Now when the junior devil ran inside the cave he had shut the gates firmly behind him. Once inside he reported to the old demon, "My lord, those two monks are outside."

"Have your lord, Monkey Lion, Snowy Lion, Elephant−fighter and Raccoon−dog come back yet?" the old demon asked.

"I haven't seen them," the junior demon replied.

"There were just the two monks looking around from high up on the peak. As soon as I saw them I turned and ran. As they came after me I shut the gates."

The old demon bowed his head in silence at this news. After a while his tears began to flow as he called out,

"This is terrible. My grandson Tawny Lion is dead. My grandsons Monkey Lion and the rest of them have all been captured by those monks and taken into the city. How am I to get my revenge?"

Pig was tied up nearby, crammed in together with the Tang Priest and the princes, terrified and miserable until he heard the old demon saying that his grandsons had been captured and taken into the city. At this he said with quiet delight, "Don't be afraid, Master. Cheer up, Your Royal Highness. My elder brother has won. He's Chapter 90

captured the whole lot of the devils and he's found his way here to rescue us."

When he had said this the old demon could be heard shouting, "Little ones, guard the place well while I go out to catch those other two monks. Then we can punish them all together."

Watch him as he strides off without armor or weapons. When he heard Monkey shouting he threw the gates of the cave wide open and went straight for him, not deigning to answer. Monkey raised his iron cudgel to stop him with a blow to the head while Friar Sand swung his staff at him. As the demon shook his principal head the eight other heads to left and right of it all opened their mouths, with which they gently picked Monkey and Friar Sand up and carried them into the cave.

"Fetch rope," he ordered; and Wily Freak, Freaky Wile and Greenface, who had come back after their escape the previous night, brought two ropes with which they tied the two of them up very securely. "Impudent ape,"

said the old demon, "you captured my seven grandsons. But now I've caught you four monks and the four princes I've got enough to ransom them with. Little ones, get some thorns and willow rods and beat this ape for me to avenge my grandson Tawny Lion."

The three junior devils then beat Monkey with willow rods, but Monkey's body had been so toughened that all the rods could do was to scratch his itches. He made no sound and was not in the least bothered, no matter how hard they hit him. The sight of it, however, made Pig, the Tang Priest and the princes all feel their hair standing on end. Before long the rods started to break up, but the demons kept on till evening, keeping no count of the number of strokes.

Friar Sand was most upset to see Monkey being given so long a flogging, so he said, "Let me take a hundred or so for him."

"Don't be so impatient," the old demon replied, "you'll get your beating tomorrow. You'll all be done in turn."

"That means it'll be me the day after tomorrow," said Pig with alarm. The beating continued for a while as night slowly fell.

"Little ones," the old demon called, "stop for now. Light the lamp and

go for something to eat and drink. I'm off to my Brocade Cloud Den for a little shut – eye. You three have all had a hard time, so keep a close watch on them. We'll carry on with the beatings tomorrow." The three junior devils moved a lamp over and hit Monkey some more on the top of his head with their willow rods, tic – tic – toc, toc – toc – tic, like the rhythm of a wooden clapper, sometimes fast and sometimes slow. By then it was very late and they all fell asleep.

Monkey now used escaping magic to shrink himself, wriggled out of his bonds, shook his fur, straightened up his clothes, took the cudgel out of his ear and shook it till it was as thick as a well – bucket and about twenty feet long.

Then he said to the three junior devils, "You animals, you hit me an awful lot of times, and now I'm going to return the compliment. I'll just shove this at you and see how you like it." One gentle push from the cudgels turned the three devils into three lumps of minced pork. Monkey then turned up the lamp and released Friar Sand.

Pig, who was feeling desperate about being tied up, could not stop himself from yelling at the top of his voice,

"My hands and feet are tied up so tight they're swollen. Why don't you come and free me?"

The idiot's shout at once woke up the old demon, who rolled straight out of bed and called out, "Who's setting them free?" The moment Monkey heard this he blew out the lamp, smashed his way through several sets of Chapter 90

doors with his cudgel and fled, not bothering about Friar Sand and the rest of them, while the old demon went into the main hall shouting, "Little ones, why's there no light? Don't let them get away!" He shouted once without getting an answer, then again, and still no answer.

When he fetched a lantern and looked all he could see were three gory lumps of minced meat on the floor. The prince, his sons, the Tang Priest and Pig were still there, but Monkey and Friar Sand had disappeared. He lit a torch, searched the front and the back and could find only Friar Sand, who was still standing pressed against the wall of a corridor. The demon knocked him down, tied him up as before, and

carried on looking for Monkey. Seeing that pair after pair of his doors had been smashed down, he realized that Monkey had destroyed them in his flight. Instead of giving chase he patched up and blockaded the doors and guarded his home.

The story now tells how Monkey left the Nine–bend Twisty Cave and rode by auspicious cloud straight back to the city of Yuhua, where all the local deities and spirits as well as the god of the city could be seen bowing in mid–air to greet him.

"Why have you only come to see me today?" Monkey asked. "When we knew that the worthy prince was entertaining you in Yuhua, Great Sage," they replied, "we did not venture to greet you. But now that the princes have been captured by ogres and you have subdued those monsters we have come to welcome you with kowtows." While Monkey was abusing them the Gold–headed Protector and the Six Ding and Six Jia generals escorted a local deity in and made him kneel on the ground.

"Great Sage," they said, "we've arrested this ground devil."

"What are you making a noise here for instead of guarding my master on Bamboo Mountain?" Monkey yelled.

"Great Sage," the Ding and Jia gods replied, "the evil spirit caught the Curtain–raising General and tied him up again after you escaped. As we could see how great his magic powers are we've brought the local deity of Bamboo Mountain here. He knows all about that evil spirit's background, so we beg you to question him, Great Sage, and find out how best to deal with him and deliver the holy monks and worthy princes from their suffering." When Monkey heard this he was delighted.

"The old demon came down to Bamboo Mountain the year before last," the local deity said, shivering and shaking as he kowtowed. "The Nine–bend Twisty Cave used to be the den of six lions. Once the old demon came the six lions all took him as their grandfather. He is a nine–headed lion called the Primal Sage of Ninefold Numinosity. If you want to deal with him you must go to the Wonderful Crag Palace in the uttermost East and fetch his master here to subdue him. Nobody else can possibly do it."

When Monkey heard this he thought for a long time before saying, "The Wonderful Crag Palace in the uttermost East is where the Heavenly Honoured Saviour of the Great Monad lives. Yes, he does

have just such a nine–headed lion under his throne. Protector, Jias," he ordered, "go back with the local deity and keep a secret watch on the master, my brother disciple, the prince of the city and his sons. The city god must guard the wall and moat. Off you go." The gods all took up guard as instructed.

The Great Sage set off his somersault cloud and traveled through the night till it was about the last watch, when he reached the Eastern Gate of Heaven, where he ran into the Heavenly King Virupaksa with his retinue of heavenly soldiers and warriors, who stopped, put their hands together in greeting and asked, "Where are you going, Great Sage?"

"I'm off to the Wonderful Crag Palace," Monkey replied when he had returned their greetings. "Why have you come to the Eastern Heaven instead of following your road to the Western Heaven?" Virupaksa asked. "When we reached the city of Yuhua," Monkey replied, "the prince of the city entertained us and told his three sons to take us as their teachers of martial arts. We had a most unpleasant surprise: coming up against a gang of lion monsters. Now I'm going to ask the Heavenly Honoured Saviour of the Great Monad, the chief monster's owner, to subdue him and save my master."

"It was because you wanted to be a teacher that you provoked that trouble with the lions," said the heavenly king. "How true," replied Monkey with a smile, "how true." The heavenly soldiers and warriors all raised joined hands in greeting then stood aside to let him pass. Monkey went in through the Eastern Gate of Heaven and was soon at the Wonderful Crag Palace. This is what could be seen: Coloured clouds behind coloured clouds,

Purple mists and rich, green vegetation.

The roof–tiles are a surge of golden flame,

And at the gates are imposing beasts of jade.

Flowers grow between gate towers, round which red mists drift; The sun shines on turquoise vapors rising from the woods.

All the immortals pay their respects,

And a thousand sages make everything flourish.

The halls of the palace are like layers of brocade;

Windows and pavilions open on all sides.

Azure dragons glow with sacred clouds;

Golden beams of brilliant light come from the magic mists.

This is a land of splendor and eternal joy,

The Wonderful Crag Palace in the uttermost East.

There was an immortal boy wearing a rainbow mantle standing at the palace gates, and as soon as he noticed the Great Sage he went in to report, "My lord, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who made havoc in Heaven is here." When the Heavenly Honoured Saviour of the Great Monad heard this he ordered all the immortals in attendance on him to go out to welcome Monkey and bring him into the palace. Here the Heavenly Honoured One was sitting on a nine–coloured lotus throne amid countless rays of auspicious light, and when he saw Monkey he came down from his throne to greet him while Monkey bowed to him from below.

Chapter 90

1260

Journey to the West

"Great Sage," the Heavenly Honoured One said, returning his bow, "I haven't seen you for years, but I did hear that you have abandoned the Way for Buddhism and are escorting the Tang Priest to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. I presume that you have now succeeded."

"Not yet," Monkey replied, "but near enough. I have escorted the Tang Priest as far as Yuhua, where the prince told his three sons to take me and the other two as their teachers of martial arts and had copies of our three magic weapons made. The weapons were, to our surprise, stolen one night. When I searched for them the next day I found that they had been stolen by a spirit turned by a golden–haired lion from Tigermouth Cave on Mount Leopard Head. I tricked them back from

him by cunning, whereupon the spirit ganged up with some other lion spirits to give me a tremendous fight. One of them is a nine–headed lion with enormous magic powers who carried my master, Pig, the prince and his three sons to the Ninebend Twisty Cave on Mount Bamboo. When Friar Sand and I went to look for them the next day we were carried off too. He had me tied up and hit so often I lost count. Luckily I was able to make my get–away by magic, but they're still suffering there. When I questioned the local deity I found out that you were his master, Heavenly Honoured One, which is why I'm here to ask you to subdue the lion and rescue them."

As soon as the Heavenly Honoured One heard this he sent his immortal officers to the lion house to call out his lionkeeper slave and question him. The lionkeeper slave was sleeping so deeply that the officers had to push and shake him before they could wake him up and drag him into the main hall. Here the Heavenly Honoured One asked him, "Where is the lion?"

All the slave could do was to kowtow with tears streaming down his face, pleading, "Spare me, spare me."

"The Great Sage Sun is here," the Heavenly Honoured One replied, "so I won't have you beaten just yet. You must explain this instant your carelessness in letting the nine–headed lion escape."

"My lord," the lionkeeper replied, "I stole and drank a jug of wine I saw in the Sweet Dew Palace of the Great Chiliocosm. Before I realized what had happened I was dead drunk. It must have slipped its chains and got away."

"That wine was given me by Lord Lao Zi of the Supreme Ultimate," the Heavenly Honoured One replied. "It's called Cyclical Nectar, and after drinking that you would have slept for three days. How many days has the lion been gone?"

"What the local deity said was that he went down there the year before last, which would mean two years or more," the Great Sage said.

"That's right," the Heavenly Honoured One said with a smile, "A day in the palaces of Heaven is a year in the mortal world. Get up," he said to the lion–tamer. "I'll spare your life. Come down to the lower world with the Great Sage and me to recapture him. You immortals can all go back. None of you need come with us."

The Heavenly Honoured One, the lion–keeper slave and the Great

Sage all went by cloud straight to Bamboo Mountain, where the Protectors of the Four Quarters and the Centre, the Six Dings, the Six Jias and the local deity of the mountain all knelt to greet them.

"Has my master been harmed while you people have been protecting him?" Brother Monkey asked.

"The evil spirit was so angry that he went to sleep," the gods replied. "He didn't torture them any more."

"That Primal Sage of mine is a true soul who has long cultivated the Way," the Heavenly Honoured One remarked. "A single call from him will go up to the Three Sages and down to the Underworld. He wouldn't Chapter 90

kill anyone lightly. Great Sage Sun, go to his gates, challenge him to battle and draw him outside for us to catch."

As soon as Monkey heard this he sprang towards the mouth of the cave, brandishing his cudgel and shouting loudly and abusively, "Damned evil spirit, give me my people back! Damned evil spirit, give me my people back!" He shouted several times, but the old demon was fast asleep and nobody answered. Monkey lost his patience, swung his cudgel and smashed his way inside, still cursing.

Only then did the old demon wake up, rise to his feet and yell with great fury, "I'm coming for you!" He shook his heads and opened his jaws to pick Monkey up.

As Monkey turned and fled the evil spirit chased after him till they were outside the cave, shouting, "Where do you think you're going, you thieving ape?"

"How dare you go on behaving so dreadfully!" said Monkey with a grin from where he was standing on the top of a high cliff. "You haven't even got the sense to realize that your life's at stake. Don't you see your master's here?"

By the time the evil spirit reached the cliff in pursuit of Monkey the Heavenly Honoured One had said a spell and shouted, "I'm here, my little Primal Sage." Recognizing his master, the monster gave up the struggle and lay down with all four feet on the ground, kowtowing.

The lionkeeper then ran over to him, took hold of his mane, and punched him hundreds of times on the neck, saying abusively, "Why did you run away, animal? You got me into terrible trouble." The lion kept his mouths shut and said nothing, not daring to move, and the lionkeeper only stopped hitting him when his fist was tired out. When a brocade saddlecloth had been put on the animal's back the Heavenly Honoured One mounted and shouted to it to go. They then rose up on coloured clouds and went straight back to the Wonderful Crag Palace.

After addressing his thanks skywards the Great Sage went into the cave and freed first the prince of Yuhua, then Sanzang, then Pig, Friar Sand and the three young princes. After this they made a leisurely search of the cave and led everyone outside. Pig then fetched some dry brushwood, piled it at the front and the back, and started a fire that left the Nine–bend Twisty Cave looking like a ruined, burnt–out kiln. Monkey released all the gods, ordered the local deity to keep guard on it, and told Pig and Friar Sand to use their magic to carry the four princes back to the city while he helped the Tang Priest along. They were soon back at the city, where the princess and the officials all came out to greet them. It was now getting dark, and a vegetarian feast was provided for everyone to enjoy. The venerable elder and his disciples slept in the Gauze Pavilion once more, and the princes in the living quarters of the palace. Of that night no more need be said.

The next day the prince issued an order for another great vegetarian banquet to be laid on. Each of the officials high and low in the palace expressed his gratitude, and Monkey asked for butchers to slaughter the six lions who were still alive, skin them like the tawny lion, and prepare their meat to be eaten. The prince, who was delighted with this proposal, gave the order for them to be killed. One animal was kept for the inside and outside palace staff, one was given to the chief administrator and the other officials in the palace, and the flesh of the other five was cut into lumps weighing one or two ounces that officers distributed among the soldiers and civilians inside and outside the city wall so that they could all eat a little. Thus the people could both try the taste and overcome their fear. Every single household was most impressed.

Chapter 90

1262

Journey to the West

By now the smiths had made the three weapons and were kowtowing

to Monkey, saying, "My lord, we have finished our work."

"How heavy are they?" Monkey asked.

"The gold – banded cudgel weighs a thousand pounds," the smiths replied, "and the nine – toothed rake and the demon – quelling staff each eight hundred pounds."

"That'll do," said Monkey, who then had the three princes asked to come out. As each took his weapon they said to the senior prince, "Your Royal Highness, our weapons have now been finished."

"They almost cost both your father and yourselves their lives," the senior prince replied. "Thanks to our divine teachers' powers," the young princes said, "we were all saved and the evil spirits have been wiped out. We'll have no trouble from them in future. Now this really is a world at peace with calm seas and rivers running clear." The four princes then rewarded the smiths and went to the Gauze Pavilion to thank the teachers.

Sanzang told the Great Sage and the other two to pass on some more martial skills quickly so as not to delay their journey. The three of them all swung their weapons in the palace yard as they taught the secrets one by one. Within a few days the three young princes were all skilled performers. They also mastered all the seventy – two routines of attack, retreat and fast and slow fighting. This was firstly because the princes were all thoroughly determined, and secondly because the Great Sage Sun had given them the divine strength beforehand that enabled them to lift and move the thousand – pound cudgel and the eight – hundred – pound rake and staff. There was all the difference in the world between their present skills and those they had had before, and there is a poem that goes:

When they celebrated their fortune in finding divine teachers

They never expected their studies to alert a lion spirit.

With evil destroyed the country was at peace;

The frontier was settled as all were devoted to the one

Entity. Ninefold Numinosity's powers lasted through their many clashes Till the Way was achieved with all – round expertise.

The brilliant teaching would be passed on for ever,

And Yuhua know eternal peace and joy.

The prince then gave another great banquet to thank the three teachers, and a huge dish of gold and silver was brought out as a reward. "Take it straight back inside," Monkey said with a smile, "take it straight back. We're monks, and that's no use to us."

"We really can't take gold or silver," put in Pig who was standing beside him, "but the lion spirits tore our clothes to ribbons. If you could give us a change of clothing that would be very kind of you." The prince Chapter 90

ordered his tailors to fetch some bolts of blue, red and brown brocade and make each of them a garment after the style and colours of their old ones. The three of them were delighted to accept and put on their new brocade tunics, after which they packed up the luggage and set off on their way again. Everyone inside and outside the city, whether young or old, exclaimed that they were arhats and living Buddhas come down to earth. Crowds packed the streets to the sound of drums and music, and banners flew overhead. Indeed: From the gate of every family the incense smoke arose;

At every household's door coloured lanterns hung in rows.

The people only went back after seeing them for a long way along their journey. Only then did the four travelers manage to leave the city and head West. By leaving they shook off all thought and immersed their hearts in the True Achievement. Indeed:

Free from thought and worry, the Buddha's land they seek,

Going faithfully, sincerely, towards the Vulture Peak.

If you do not know how much further the journey was to be or when it was to end, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 91

Admiring the Moon Festival Lanterns in Jinping

The Tang Priest Confesses in Dark Essence Cave

Where should one strive to practice dhyana?

Swiftly to extirpate the misdeeds of the thought – horse and the mind – ape.

When they are firmly tethered they give off radiance,

But whoever halts falls to the three paths of suffering.

If one allows the divine elixir to leak away,

The jade – pure nature will wither as one slackens.

Anger, joy and worry must all be swept away:

When the wonderful mystery is gained it seems like nothing.

Chapter 91

1264

Journey to the West

The story tells how the Tang Priest and his three disciples left the city of Yuhua and had a very easy journey in what really was a land of paradise. When they had been travelling for five or six days another city appeared.

"Where is this?" the Tang Priest asked Brother Monkey.

"It's a city," Monkey replied, "but there are no flags on the poles above the city wall and I don't know this area, so I'll ask when we get closer." When they reached the Eastern suburb they found it noisy with bars and tea – houses and bustling with a rice market and oil shops. Some idlers who were wandering in the streets with nothing better to do crowded round for a better look when they saw Pig's long snout, Friar Sand's black face and Monkey's red eyes, but they dared not come any closer to question the travelers. The Tang Priest was sweating with the worry that they would provoke trouble as they crossed several more streets and had still not yet reached the city wall. Then they saw a monastery gate over which were the words CLOUDS OF

COMPASSION MONASTERY.

"What about going in here to give the horse a rest and take a meal?" the Tang Priest suggested, to which Monkey replied, "Splendid, splendid." The four of them then went inside, and this is what they saw: Splendid, towering buildings,

Gleaming bases for statues..

The Buddha hall rise above the clouds;

The monks' cells lie in the moonlit silence.

Red mists circle the stupas;

In the shade of jade – green trees the scripture – wheel is cool.

This is a true Pure Land,

Another Naga Palace,

Where purple mists surround the Mahavira Hall.

The cloisters are never empty of people enjoying the sights,

And visitors climb the pagoda that is always open.

Incense burns in the stand at every moment,

And lamps shine on the altar through the night.

A golden bell rings rhythmically in the abbot's lodgings

As monks worship the Buddha by reciting sutras.

Chapter 91

1265

Journey to the West

As the four of them looked around a monk came along the cloister and said to the Tang Priest with polite gestures of greeting, "Where have you come from, Teacher?"

"From the Tang Court in China," the Tang Priest replied, at which the monk went down on his knees to kowtow, only to be quickly helped up by the Tang Priest, who asked, "Why do you perform this great courtesy, reverend abbot?"

"All the lovers of goodness here who read the sutras and recite the name of the Buddha hope to achieve rebirth in your land of China, so that when I saw you coming in your magnificent mitre and robes I was certain that your present splendor must be the result of your

successful cultivation in earlier lives. That's why it is right to kowtow to you."

"It alarmed me," said the Tang Priest with a smile, "it alarmed me. I am only an itinerant monk, and know no splendor at all. To be able to live at your leisure and ease as you do, abbot, is real bliss." The monk then led the Tang Priest to worship the Buddha statues in the main hall. It was only now that Sanzang called for his disciples. After seeing their master start talking to the monk, Monkey and the other two had been standing in a group with their faces averted, holding the horse's bridle and looking after the luggage, so that the monk had not noticed them.

But when they turned round on hearing the Tang Priest's call the sight of them so frightened the monk that he called out, "My lord, why are your distinguished disciples so hideously ugly?"

"Ugly they may be," the Tang Priest replied, "but they do have some magical powers. I have been very grateful for their protection all the way along the journey."

As they were speaking more monks came out to greet them. The monk who had been the first to welcome the visitors explained to the others, "This teacher has come from Great Tang in China, and these three gentlemen are his distinguished disciples."

"Teacher," said the others with mixed pleasure and apprehension, "why have you come here from Great China?"

"I have been commanded by the Tang emperor to worship the Buddha and seek the scriptures in the Western Heaven," Sanzang replied. "As I was passing this way I have come to your monastery to ask where we are and take a vegetarian meal before setting out again." The monks were all delighted, and they invited the visitors into the abbot's lodgings, where there were some more monks who were performing ceremonies on behalf of benefactors.

The monk who had met them first went on to explain to the others, "Come and have a look at what people from China are like: some are handsome and some are ugly. The beauty of the handsome ones could never be caught in a painting or drawing, and the ugly ones look really weird." Both the monks and the benefactors all came to greet them, after which everyone sat down.

When tea had been drunk the Tang Priest inquired, "What is this fine country called?"

"This is Jinping, one of the outer prefectures of India," the monks replied.

"How far is it from this prefecture to Vulture Peak?" the Tang Priest asked. "It is about seven hundred miles from here to the capital," the monks replied, "and we have walked that distance. As we haven't gone further Chapter 91

West to Vulture Peak we don't know how far that is and would not like to make a wild guess." The Tang Priest thanked them.

A little later a vegetarian meal was provided, after which the Tang Priest wanted to be on his way, only to be pressed to stay by the monks and the benefactors who said, "Teacher, you must stay for a couple of days or so.

Enjoy the Full Moon Festival before you go on your way."

"On my journey I have only been aware of mountains and rivers and the danger of running into ogres or monsters," the Tang Priest replied, "and I have lost my sense of time. I don't know when Full Moon is."

"It's because your heart is so set on worshipping the Buddha and on enlightenment that you have not thought about it, Teacher," the monks replied. "Today is the thirteenth of the first month and the lanterns will be tried out tonight. The day after tomorrow is the fifteenth, when the festival begins, and it goes on till the lanterns are put away on the eighteenth or nineteenth. We enjoy celebrations here and our prefect, who cares for the people, has lanterns set out everywhere and music played all night. We also have a Bridge of Golden Lamps— —it's an ancient tradition that still flourishes. If you will stay for a few days, my lords, our monastery can certainly afford to entertain you." The Tang Priest had no choice but to stay. As the bell and drum in the Buddha hall resounded to the skies the faithful came in from the streets bringing lanterns to present to the Buddha. The Tang Priest and the rest of them came out of the abbot's lodgings to look at the lanterns, after which everyone turned in.

The next day, when they had eaten the vegetarian breakfast the monks of the monastery brought them, they strolled in the garden at the back. It really was a lovely place: It is the first month of the year,

The beginning of the spring.

The wooded garden is quiet and elegant;

The beauty of the scene subdued.

Throughout the four seasons flowers and trees contend;

Turquoise peaks rise behind each other.

Fragrant flowers are growing before the steps,

And scent comes from the plum – tree's branches.

Where there is red it joins the tender peach blossom;

Where there is green it mingles with the willows' fresh green.

Forget about the splendor of the Gold Valley Garden;

Say nothing of the Wang River landscapes painted by Wang Wei.

In the flowing stream

Chapter 91

1267

Journey to the West

The wild ducks bob and rise;

Among bamboos by the thousand

Poets ponder their choice of words.

Tree and herbaceous peonies, myrtle, fleeting – smile flowers,

That waken when their time is due;

Camellias, red plum blossom, winter jasmine and daphne,

All early to open out their beauty.

The snow piled by the hidden cliff seems frozen solid still;

The clouds that drift by the distant trees already bring early traces of spring.

The deer sees its reflection beside the pool;

Cranes come to hear the lute beneath the pines.

A few halls and pavilions to East and West,

Where travelers may stay;

Buildings and pagodas to North and South

Where monks may meditate in peace.

Among the flowers

Are one or two houses to nourish one's nature,

Where double eaves rise above each other.

Amid the hills and streams

Are three or four cells in which to reline magic, Peaceful and light.

This is indeed a natural spot for a recluse:

Why look elsewhere for the earthly paradise?

After a day enjoying the garden they inspected the lanterns in the Buddha hall before going to look at the lantern festival. This is what they saw:

Chapter 91

1268

Journey to the West

A splendid city of agate,

A fairyland of glass;

Palaces of crystal and mica,

Like layer upon layer of brocade,

Openwork carving behind openwork carving.

The dazzling bridge of stars moved heaven and earth

While trees of fire made waves of red

Flutes and drums played in the streets.

A moon like a ring of jade hung over a thousand gates;

Fragrant breezes blew through ten thousand homes.

There were giant turtle peaks soaring on high,

Fishes and dragons emerging from the sea,

Phoenixes sporting in the sky.

As all admired the moon and the lanterns

The atmosphere was full of harmony.

Among the crowds dressed in fine silks

All enjoyed the songs and panpipes.

Carriages rumbled along.

There was no end of beautiful faces,

Dashing gallants, And marvellous sights.

When Sanzang and the others had looked at the lanterns in the monastery they wandered around the streets of the Eastern suburb, not going back to bed till the second watch in the middle of the night.

The next day Sanzang said to the monks, "I made a vow to sweep pagodas, and on the occasion of tonight's Moon Festival I would like to ask the reverend abbot to open the doors of the pagoda to allow me to fulfil this vow." The monks opened the doors, and when Friar Sand fetched his cassock and brought it to him on the ground floor he put it over his shoulders and prayed to the Buddha. Then he swept the ground floor with a broom, took the cassock off and gave it back to Friar Sand. He swept the second story next, and so on story by story till he reached the top. In every story there was a Buddha, and in each one he opened all the windows, Chapter 91

swept the floor, and enjoyed the splendid views. By the time he had finished sweeping and come down again it was late and all the lamps had been lit.

It was now the night of the full moon. "Venerable teacher," the monks said, "last night you only saw the lamps in our humble monastery and the outskirts of the city. As tonight is the main festival why don't we go into the city to see the golden lamps there?" The Tang Priest was glad to follow this suggestion, and he went with his three disciples and the monks of the monastery into the city to see the lanterns. Indeed: On the festive fifteenth night

The harmony of spring begins with the first full moon.

Decorated lanterns hang in the busy markets

As all sing the songs of a world at peace.

Over the lantern light in streets and markets

The moon's round mirror rises in the sky

Like a silver dish, driven by the charioteer Ping Yi.

The lanterns were like a brocade carpet woven by fairies;

The lanterns were reflected by the moon,

Doubling its brilliance;

The moon shone on the lanterns,

Making them resplendent.

There was no end of iron – chain star bridges,

Lantern flowers and trees of fire.

Snowflake lanterns,

Plum – blossom lanterns,

Like fragments of ice in spring;

Embroidered screen lanterns,

Painted screen lanterns,

Made up from every color.

Walnut lanterns,

Chapter 91

1270

Journey to the West

Lotus lanterns,

Hung high on lantern towers;

Blue lion lanterns,

White elephant lanterns,

Fixed on lofty frames.

Shrimp lanterns,

Terrapin lanterns,

Placed in front of awnings;

Goat lanterns,

Hare lanterns,

Bringing the eaves to life.

Eagle lanterns,

Phoenix lanterns,

Lined up next to each other;

Tiger lanterns,

Horse lanterns,

Being carried along together.

Red—crowned crane lanterns,

White deer lanterns,

Carrying the Star of Longevity;

Goldfish lanterns,

Whale lanterns,

On which rode the poet Li Bai.

Giant turtle mountain lanterns,

Where gods and immortals gathered;

Revolving horse lanterns

Chapter 91

1271

Journey to the West

On which warriors joined combat.

The towers of lanterns on thousands of houses

Made a world of clouds and smoke for several miles.

On one side, shining reins and flying jade saddles;

On the other, rumbling carriages leave fragrance behind.

On the red balcony,

Leaning against the railings,

Behind the curtains,

Shoulder to shoulder,

Hand in hand,

Pairs of beauties were eager for the fun.

By the bridge over green waters,

Noisy,

Many – coloured,

Drunken,

Laughing

Couples enjoyed the brilliant sights.

All of the city's flutes and drums were playing;

Panpipes and songs went on all night.

There is also this poem as evidence:

Amid the fine brocades, of lotus were the songs;

This blessed land at peace was full of many throngs.

The lanterns and the moon upon this festive night

Foretold rich harvests after rain and wind just right.

Chapter 91

1272

Journey to the West

This was a night when the curfew was relaxed, so that there were huge crowds and a great commotion. People were dancing, walking on stilts, wearing masks and riding elephants, pushing and crowding to East and to West as they looked all around. When they reached the bridge of golden lamps the Tang Priest and the monks pushed forward for a look and saw that it consisted of three golden lamps each the size of a water vat and shaped like a two – storied pavilion with a light shining out through intricate gold and silver filigree openwork.

Glazed ceramic tiles inside the lamps reflected their light. They were so bright they outshone the moon, and their oil was very fragrant.

"What sort of oil do those lamps burn?" the Tang Priest asked the monks, "and why does it smell so remarkably good?"

"You wouldn't know that, Teacher," the monks replied. "There is a county near this prefecture called Mintian.

In the whole county there are 240 wards, and when we have our annual assignment of jobs to be done for the state, 240 households have to provide oil. All the other jobs assigned by the prefecture or county are reasonable enough, but these oil households have a very hard time. Every household has to take it on for a year, and it costs them over two hundred ounces of silver. The oil isn't ordinary oil but perfumed refined butter oil. One ounce costs two ounces of silver and a pound costs thirty – two ounces. Each of the lamps holds five hundred pounds of oil, making 1,500 pounds for the three of them, costing 48,000 ounces of silver. With other miscellaneous expenses it comes to over 50,000 ounces. And that only lasts three nights."

"How can so much oil be used up in only three nights?" Monkey asked.

"In each lamp there are forty – nine big wicks about the size of an egg made of rushes wrapped in silk floss,"

the monks explained. "When they have burned for one night the Lord Buddhas appear, the oil all vanishes and the lamp goes out."

"I suppose the Lord Buddhas take all the oil," said Pig with a grin as he stood at one side.

"That's right," the monks replied, "that's what everyone in the city has always said ever since ancient times. If the oil runs dry they say that the Buddhas have taken the oil and the crops will certainly be bountiful; but if it doesn't dry up on one occasion there will be famine, drought and the wrong weather at the wrong time in that year. That's why everyone makes this offering."

As they were talking there was the howling of a wind up in the air, sending everyone who was admiring the lanterns fleeing in terror. The monks could not hold their ground either. "Let's go back, venerable teacher,"

they said, "the wind's here. It's the Lord Buddhas bringing blessings. They're here to see the lanterns."

"How can you tell that?" the Tang Priest asked.

"It's the same every year," the monks replied. "The wind blows up before the third watch. Everybody gets out of the way as they know that it is the Lord Buddhas bringing down blessings."

"I am one who thinks of, invokes and worships Buddhas," the Tang Priest said. "If the Buddhas are honoring us with their presence on this festive occasion it would be wonderful to be able to worship them." He rejected the monks' repeated urgings to go back, and a little later the forms of three Buddhas appeared in the wind and approached the lamps. The Tang Priest was so excited that he ran to the top of the lamp bridge and threw himself down worship.

Chapter 91

1273

Journey to the West

Brother Monkey rushed forward in alarm to drag him to his feet and say, "They're no good, Master. I'm sure they're evil." Before the words were even out of his mouth the lamps all went out as with a great whoosh the Tang Priest was swept up by the wind. It was terrible! Who knew what evil monsters from what cave in what mountain had been posing as Buddhas to watch the golden lamps?

Pig and Friar Sand were thrown into such panic that they rushed all about, searching and calling for their master. "Brothers," called Monkey, "no use shouting here. The master's bliss has turned to disaster. He's been carried off by evil spirits."

"How can you tell that, my lord," the appalled monks asked.

"You're just a bunch of mortals," Monkey replied with a grin, "so you haven't realized what's been happening all these years. The evil spirits have fooled you into thinking they're true Buddhas coming down to accept the offerings of lamps. The Buddhas that appeared when the wind blew just now were three evil spirits. My master didn't realize who they were, so he went up on the top of the bridge to worship them. They covered up all the lights and carried him off together with the oil in the lamps. As I was a bit too late the three of them got away by wind."

"Brother," said Friar Sand, "Whatever are we to do?"

"Not a moment to lose," said Monkey. "You two go back the monastery with the monks and look after the horse and the luggage. I'm going after them while this wind's still blowing."

The splendid Great Sage then shot up by his somersault cloud into mid air, picked up the stench of the wind and headed Northeast in pursuit,

carrying on till all of a sudden the wind dropped at dawn. A great mountain could be seen, a most steep, towering and splendid mountain:

Many a foothill and ravine,

Twisting and bending streams.

Creepers hang from the beetling precipice,

Pine and cypress rise from the lonely rock.

Cranes cry in the morning mists,

Wild geese call among the clouds at dawn.

Jutting peaks like a row of halberds,

Jagged crags of interlocking rocks.

The summits rise to eighty thousand feet,

And sheer—walled ridges make a thousand angles.

Wild flowers and noble trees all flourish with the spring;

Chapter 91

1274

Journey to the West

Cuckoo and oriole respond to the scenery with song.

Majestic beauty,

Towering grandeur,

Steep, grotesque crags hard to climb.

One will stay there long in silence:

All that can be heard are tigers and leopards breathing.

River deer and white deer wander around;

Jade—coloured hares and gray wolves come and go.

The stream in the deep ravine will flow for a million miles;

Twisting torrents splash loud against the rocks.

While the Great Sage was on the top of a scar looking for his way he saw four people coming from the Western slopes driving three goats and all shouting, "New Year." Monkey's fiery eyes with their golden pupils flashed as he took a closer look to see that they were the four Duty Gods of the year, the month, the day and the hour in disguise.

The Great Sage then pulled out his iron cudgel, shook it till it was as thick as a ricebowl and about twelve feet long and sprang down from the cliff with a shout of, "Where are you skulking off to like that, trying to hide your faces?"

When the four Duty Gods realized that he had rumbled them they at once turned back into their normal selves, kowtowed beside the path and said, "Forgive us, Great Sage, forgive us."

"Just because I haven't had any jobs for you recently you thought I was getting lax and so you've all become very casual," Monkey said. "You didn't even greet me. It's outrageous! Why aren't you giving my master your secret protection? Where are you going?"

"Because your master somewhat forgot his dhyana nature and was so eager to enjoy himself in the Clouds of Compassion Monastery in Jinping Prefecture," the Duty Gods said, "he met with evil at the height of splendor, his joy turned to disaster, and he was captured by the evil spirits. The Defenders of the Faith are looking after him at the moment. We realized that you would be coming after him this very night, Great Sage, and we came here to report to you in case you did not know the mountains and forests here."

"If you were here to report," said Brother Monkey, "why did you disguise your identities, why were you driving three goats, and what were you shouting and yelling for?"

"The three goats were for luck at the beginning of the year.

They are to drive away the evil that's obstructing your master."

Monkey had been absolutely determined to beat them, but on hearing this explanation he let them off and put his cudgel away as his fury turned to delight. "Are there evil spirits on this mountain?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "yes. This mountain is called Green Dragon Mountain and there's a cave in it called the Dark Essence Cave where three evil spirits live. The oldest is called King Cold – avoider, the second is called King Heat – avoider and the third is called King Dust – avoider. They've lived here for a thousand years and have been fond of refined butter oil since they were children. Ever since they became spirits some years ago they've been pretending to be Buddhas to trick the officials and people of Jinping into setting out those golden lamps full of the refined butter oil that they take in their Buddha guises in the middle of every first month. When they saw your master this time they realized that he was a holy monk and carried him off to the cave too. Any day now they'll slice off his flesh to fry in the refined butter. You must use your skills to save him as soon as possible."

On hearing this Monkey dismissed the four Duty Gods with a shout and went round the mountain looking for the cave. Within a mile or two he saw a rock face by a gill, at the foot of which was a stone building with a pair of stone doors that stood ajar. Beside the doors was a stone tablet on which was inscribed GREEN DRAGON MOUNTAIN

DARK ESSENCE CAVE

Not daring to go in uninvited, Monkey stopped and called, "Give me my master back at once, monster." With a great noise the doors burst wide open, and out rushed a crowd of bull – headed demons who glared as they asked, "Who are you, yelling here like that?"

"I'm the senior disciple of the holy monk Tang Sanzang who's come from Great Tang in the East to fetch scriptures," Monkey replied. "He was looking at the lanterns in Jinping along our way when your chief demons carried him off here. Give him back at once if you want me to spare your lives. If you don't I'll turn our den upside – down and turn all you demons into just pus and blood."

As soon as the junior demons heard this they rushed inside to report, "Disaster, Your Majesties, disaster!" The three old evil spirits had taken Sanzang into the depths of the cave and with no further ado were telling their underlings to strip him and wash him with water from the torrent. They were just about to have him sliced and diced into tiny pieces to fry in the refined butter when they heard the report of disaster from outside. The oldest demon king asked with some alarm

what had happened.

"There's a hairy – faced monk who looks like a thunder god outside," the junior devils replied. "He's shouting that Your Majesties carried his master here and wants him given back straight away if our lives are to be spared. Otherwise he'll turn our den upside – down and turn us all into pus and blood."

This news shocked the demon kings, who all said, "We've only just caught the wretch, and haven't even asked him his name and his background. Little ones, dress him again and bring him here to be questioned. We must find out who he is and where he's from."

A crowd of devils untied the Tang Priest, put his clothes back on and pushed him to before the thrones, where he fell to his knees, trembling with fear, and pleaded, "Spare my life, Your Majesties, spare my life."

Chapter 91

1276

Journey to the West

"Where are you from, monk?" the three evil spirits said, all talking at once, "and why did you rush into the way of our clouds instead of avoiding the Buddha images?"

"I have been sent by the Great Tang Emperor in the East to worship the Lord Buddha and fetch the scriptures from the Great Thunder Monastery in India," Sanzang replied with kowtows. "When I went into the Clouds of Compassion Monastery for a vegetarian meal the monks there pressed me to stay to see the lanterns at the Moon Festival. Seeing Your Majesties appearing as Buddhas from the bridge of golden lamps I kowtowed to you because my mortal eyes took you for real Buddhas. That's why I got in the way of your clouds, Your Majesties."

"How long was the journey from your country in the East to here?" the evil spirits asked. "How many people have you got with you? What are they called? Tell us the truth straight away and we'll spare your life."

"My secular name was Chen Xuanzang," the Tang Priest replied, "and I was a monk in the Jinshan Monastery from boyhood. Later I was given official rank as a monk in the Hongfu Monastery in Chang'an. When the minister Wei Zheng beheaded the Dragon King of the River Jing in his dream and the Tang emperor came back to life after his

travels in the underworld, a Great Land and Water Mass was held for the rebirth of souls.

The Tang emperor chose me to officiate at this ceremony and expound the great principles. The Bodhisattva Guanyin appeared during the mass and informed me that in the Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven there are three stores of true scriptures that can carry the dead up to Heaven. I was sent to fetch them and given the title Sanzang, or "Three Stores." As I use Tang as my surname people call me Tang Sanzang. I have three disciples. The first one is called Sun Wukong the Novice, and he is the Great Sage Equaling Heaven who has been converted to the truth."

This news came as a shock to the evil spirits, who asked, "Did this Great Sage Equaling Heaven make great havoc in Heaven five hundred years ago?"

"Yes, yes," the Tang Priest said. "The second one is called Zhu Wuneng or Zhu Bajie. He is Marshal Tian Peng come down to earth. The third is Sha Wujing, or Friar Sand, the Curtain-lifting General in mortal reincarnation."

"It's as well we haven't eaten him yet," the evil spirits all exclaimed in horror. "Little ones, lock the Tang Priest in iron chains at the back. When we've caught his three disciples we'll eat them together." They then mustered a force of armed yak, water-buffalo and ox spirits to go outside carrying bugles, waving banners and beating drums.

Once the three evil spirits were fully clad in their armor they went out and shouted, "Who's that who dares come here shouting like that?" Monkey slipped round behind the scar to have a good look, and this is what the evil spirits were like:

Multi-coloured faces, round eyes,

Towering horns.

Four sharp-pointed ears,

Neat and shining bright.

Bodies patterned like a painting,

Covered with brocades that shine like fireflies.

The first one wore a hat of foxes' fur

And hot steam rose from the long hairs of his face.

The second wore a flaming cloak of lightest gauze

And had four gleaming, jade – like hooves.

The third had a mighty roar like thunder;

His sharp and pointed fangs were just like silver needles.

Each was brave and fierce

As they carried their three weapons;

One used a battle – axe,

One was an expert in the cutlass,

And the third had a knotted flail resting on his shoulders.

The other evil spirits, tall and short, fat and thin, senior and junior, were all cattle – headed monsters carrying spears or clubs. There were three big banners clearly inscribed with the words "King Cold – avoider," "King Heat – avoider" and "King Dust – avoider." After looking at all this for a while Monkey lost his patience and went up to them with a shout of, "Can you recognize Monkey, thieving damned ogres?"

"Are you the Sun Wukong who made havoc in Heaven?" the evil spirits shouted back. "It really is a case of I heard your name before I saw your face:

The sight of that would bring the gods disgrace.

So all you are is a macaque."

"I'll get you, you lamp – oil thieves," Monkey retorted in high dudgeon. "Don't talk such rubbish, you smooth – tongued monsters. Give my master back at once." With that he advanced and swung his iron cudgel, to be parried by the old demons who raised their weapons to meet the blow. A splendid fight ensued in the mountain hollow:

Battle – axe, cutlass and flail

Chapter 91

1278

Journey to the West

Met by the Monkey King's lone cudgel.

Cold – avoider, Heat – avoider and Dust – avoider

Had heard of the Great Sage Equaling Heaven.

When the cudgel rose it scared demons and gods;

Axe and cutlass hacked and flew.

A primal dharma image of true emptiness

Holding off three demons masquerading as Buddhas.

Their noses all greasy with this year's stolen oil,

They tried to snatch the monk sent by the emperor.

One for his master's sake feared not the lengthy road;

The others in their greed had lamps offered every year.

All that could be beard was clash of axe and cutlass

And the noisy clatter of the cudgel.

With clashes and lunges three fought against one

As each showed his skill with blocks and parries.

They fought from dawn till almost nightfall

And a victor had yet to emerge in the struggle.

By the time Monkey's cudgel had gone 150 rounds with the three demons it was nearly evening and the outcome was still in doubt. Then Dust – avoider sprang forward from the ranks with a swing of his flail and waved a flag, whereupon the crowd of cattle – headed demons swarmed round Monkey, encircling him and swinging wildly at him with their weapons. Seeing that things were going badly,

Monkey set off his somersault cloud and fled in a whoosh. The demons did not go after him but called their devils back so that everyone could have an evening meal. They told the junior devils to take a bowl of food to Sanzang as well: he was not to be dealt with until Monkey had been caught. As the master was a lifelong vegetarian and was besides feeling miserable he sobbed and let none of the food touch his lips.

The story tells how Monkey rode his cloud back to the Clouds of Compassion Monastery and called,

"Brothers."

Chapter 91

1279

Journey to the West

On hearing this Pig and Friar Sand, who were waiting for him and discussing what to do, came out together to greet him with the words, "Brother, why are you only back now after being away all day? What's happened to the master?"

"I followed the smell of the wind right through the night till we got to a mountain and it disappeared,"

Monkey replied with a smile. "Luckily the four Duty Gods told me that the mountain's called Green Dragon Mountain and that there's a Dark Essence Cave on it where three evil spirits live: King Cold – avoider, King Heat – avoider and King Dust – avoider. They've been stealing the oil here for years on end by disguising themselves as Buddhas to trick the officials of Jinping Prefecture. When they came across us this year they wickedly carried our master off with them. I told the Duty Gods and the rest of them to give the master some secret protection while I shouted insults at them from outside their doors. When the three demons came out they all looked like bullheaded demons. The first of them fought with a battle – axe, the second with a cutlass and the third with a flail. They had a whole gang of cattle – headed monsters with them, waving banners and beating drums. The fight went on all day and was still in the balance when one of the demon kings waved a flag to bring all the junior devils forward. As it was late and I was worried that I couldn't beat them I came back by somersault cloud."

"I reckon it must be the Demon King of Fengdu who's making trouble for you," said Pig.

"What makes you guess that?" Friar Sand asked. "I can tell because our big brother said they were all cattle—headed monsters," replied Pig with a laugh.

"No, no," said Monkey. "I saw them and they were all rhinoceros spirits."

"If they're rhinos we've just got to catch them and saw their horns off," said Pig. "They'll be worth quite a bit of silver."

As they were talking the monks all asked Monkey if he had eaten any supper. "I'll have something if it's no trouble," Brother Monkey replied, "but I can do without just as well."

"Surely you're hungry after fighting all day, my lord," the monks said.

"You can't get hungry in a mere day," Monkey laughed. "I once went without food for five hundred years."

The monks did not know whether he was telling the truth or joking, and a little later food was brought in that Monkey ate, after which he said, "Tidy up and go to sleep. We'll go and fight them again tomorrow and capture the demon kings so as to rescue the master."

"What nonsense, brother," said Friar Sand, who was standing to one side. "As the saying goes, 'Delay brings wisdom.' It'll be terrible if that monster stays awake tonight and murders the master. We'd better go there right now and make such a row that he can't do anything. It may go badly wrong if we lose a single moment."

When Pig heard this he braced himself and said, "Friar Sand's right. Let's go and put down those demons. The moon's bright enough." Accepting their advice, Monkey left his instructions with the monks of the monastery.

"Look after the luggage and the horse. When we've captured the evil spirits we'll bring them back here to prove to the prefect that they're imposters. Then he can end the oil levy and relieve the common people of this hardship. That'll be a good thing, won't it?" The monks all accepted their orders while the three of them left the city by auspicious cloud. Indeed:

Chapter 91

Journey to the West

Idleness and unrestraint

Threw the dhyana into confusion;

Danger and catastrophe

Led the Way – heart into delusion.

If you don't know who was to win this encounter listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 92

Three Monks Wage a Great Fight on Green Dragon Mountain

Four Stars Seize the Rhinoceros Monsters

The story tells how after the Great Sage Monkey took his two brother disciples by gale and cloud to the Northeast they were soon bringing their cloud down at the entrance to the Dark Essence Cave on Green Dragon Mountain. Pig was just about to smash the doors in when Monkey said, "Wait a moment. I'll go in and find out whether the master's still alive before we have it out with him."

"But the doors are shut very tightly," said Friar Sand. How will you get in?"

"I've got my methods," Monkey replied.

The splendid Great Sage then put his cudgel away, made a spell with his fingers while saying the magic words, called "Change!" and turned into a fire – fly. He was really nimble. Just look at him: Wings that shine like shooting stars:

The ancients say fire – flies grow from rotting plants.

His powers of transformation are truly great,

And he loves to wander all around.

When he flies to the stone doors to look within

A draft blows through the crack beside him.

A single jump and he is in the dark courtyard,

Watching the movements of the evil spirits.

Chapter 92

1281

Journey to the West

As he flew in he saw some cattle sprawled around on the ground, fast asleep and snoring like thunder. In the main hall nothing was moving, and all the doors were closed. Not knowing where the three evil spirits were sleeping, he went through the hall and shone with his light into the back, where he heard sobs. The Tang Priest was chained to a pillar under the eaves at the back and weeping. Monkey kept out of sight as he listened to what he was crying about, and this is what he heard:

"Since I left Chang'an in China some ten years back and more, I have had to suffer much crossing all those rivers and mountains.

I came out to the West at a very happy season,

Arriving in the city for the festival of lanterns.

"I failed to understand that the Buddhas were impostors

All because my fate seems to doom me to distress.

My disciples gave pursuit and will use their mighty powers:

I pray they will be able to achieve a great success."

Delighted to hear this, Monkey spread his wings and flew closer to his master, who wiped away his tears and observed, "Goodness, the West really is different. This is only the first month of the year, when dormant insects are just beginning to wake up. Fancy seeing a fire—fly now!"

"Master," said Brother Monkey, unable to keep quiet any longer, "I'm here."

"I was just wondering how there could be a fire—fly at this time of year, and it's you," the Tang Priest replied with delight.

"Master," said Monkey, turning back into himself, "the journey's been held up so long and so much effort has been wasted because you can't tell true from false. All the way along I've told you demons are no

good, but you will kowtow to them. When those devils covered up the lamps to steal the refined butter oil they carried you off too. I told Pig and Friar Sand to go back to the monastery and keep an eye on our things while I followed the smell of the wind here. I didn't know what the place was called, but luckily the four Duty Gods told me that this is Dark Essence Cave on Green Dragon Mountain. I fought the monsters all day long till I went back at evening, told my brother—disciples the full story, and came back here with them instead of going to bad. As I thought it was too late at night to fight and didn't know where you were I transformed myself to come in and find out what's going on."

"Are Pig and Friar Sand outside?" the happy Tang Priest asked.

"Yes," Monkey replied. "I've just had a look around and seen that the evil spirits are all asleep. I'll unlock you, smash the doors down and get you out." The Tang Priest nodded his head in gratitude.

Chapter 92

1282

Journey to the West

Using his unlocking magic, Monkey made the lock open at a touch. He was just leading his master to the front of the cave when the demon kings could be heard shouting from their bedrooms, "Shut the doors tight, little ones, and be careful of fire. Why can't we hear the watchmen calling the watches? Where are the clappers and bells?"

After a day's hard fighting the junior demons were all asleep, exhausted; and they only woke up when they heard the shout. To the sound of clappers and bells several of them came out from the back holding weapons and beating gongs, and they just happened to bump into Monkey and his master.

"Where do you think you're going, my fine monks, now you've broken the locks?" the junior devils all shouted together, and with no further argument Monkey pulled out his cudgel, shook it to make it as thick as a rice bowl and struck, killing two of them at a blow. The rest of them dropped their weapons, went to the central hall, beat on the doors and shouted, "Disaster, Your Majesties, disaster. The hairy—faced monk's got inside and he's killing people."

The moment the three demons heard this they tumbled out of their beds and ordered, "Catch them! Catch them!" This gave the Tang

Priest such a fright that his hands and legs turned weak. Monkey abandoned him and stormed his way forward, swinging his cudgel.

The junior devils could not stop him as, pushing two or three aside here and knocking two or three over there, he smashed several pairs of doors open and rushed straight out, shouting, "Where are you, brothers?"

Pig and Friar Sand greeted him, rake and staff raised for action, with the question, "What's up, brother?"

Monkey told them all about how he had transformed himself to rescue the master, been found by the spirits when they woke up, and been forced to abandon him and fight his way out.

Now that they had recaptured the Tang Priest, the demon kings had him locked up in chains again and questioned him in the glare of lamplight, as they brandished cutlass and axe. "How did you open the lock, damn you," they asked, "and how did that ape get inside? Confess this moment and we'll spare your life, or else we'll cut you in half."

This so terrified the Tang Priest that he fell to his knees shivering and shaking and said, "Your Majesties, my disciple Sun Wukong can do seventy–two kinds of transformations. Just now he turned into a fire–fly and flew in to rescue me. We never realized that Your Majesties would wake up or that we would bump into Their Junior Majesties. My wicked disciple wounded a couple of them, and when they all started shouting and going for us with weapons and torches he abandoned me and escaped."

"If we'd woken up earlier he'd never have got away," the three demon kings said with loud guffaws. They then told their underlings to fasten the doors firmly at front and back and stop shouting.

"As they've shut the doors and stopped shouting I think they must be going to murder the master," said Friar Sand. "We must act."

"You're right," said Pig. "Let's smash the doors," The idiot showed off his magical powers by smashing the stone doors to smithereens with a blow from his rake then shouted at the top of his voice, "Thieving, oil–stealing monsters! Send my master out right now!"

This gave the junior devils inside the doors such a fright that they tumbled and ran inside to report, "Disaster, Your Majesties, disaster. The monks have smashed the front doors."

Chapter 92

1283

Journey to the West

"They're outrageous, damn them," the three demon kings said in a great fury, and when they had sent for their armor and fastened it on they took their weapons and led their underlings into battle. It was now about the third watch of the night, and the moon in the middle of the sky made all as bright as day. As they led their forces out they wasted no more words and started fighting. Monkey held off the battle – axe, Pig blocked the cutlass, and Friar Sand took on the flail.

Three monks with cudgel, staff and rake;

Three evil monsters both brave and angry.

The battle – axe, the cutlass and the flail

Made howling winds and set the sand flying.

In their first clashes they breathed out baleful mists,

Then as they flew around they scattered coloured clouds.

The nailed rake went through its routines round the body,

The iron cudgel was even more splendidly heroic,

And the demon – quelling staff was something rarely seen on earth;
But the unrepentant ogres would not yield a foot of ground.

The bright – bladed axe had a sharp – pointed butt,

The whirling flail made a pattern of flowers,

And the flashing cutlass swung like a painted door;

But the monks were their match.

One side was fighting with fury for their master's life;

The other hit at their faces so as not to release the Tang Priest.

The axe hacked and the cudgel blocked in the struggle for mastery;
The rake swung and the cutlass struck as they fought;

The knotted flail and the demon – quelling staff,

Coming and going in a splendid display.

Chapter 92

1284

Journey to the West

When the three monks and the three monsters had been fighting for a long time without either side coming out on top King Cold – avoider shouted, "Come on, little ones!" The monsters all charged at Pig, quickly tripping him up and bringing him to the ground. Several water – buffalo spirits dragged and pulled him inside the cave, where they tied him up. When Friar Sand saw that Pig had disappeared and heard the mooing of all the cattle he then raised his staff, feinted at King Dust – avoider and tried to flee, only to be rushed by another crowd of spirits who pulled at him, sending him staggering. However hard he struggled he could not get up, and he too was carried off to be tied up. Realizing that he was in an impossible situation, Monkey escaped by somersault cloud.

When Pig and Friar Sand were dragged to him the Tang Priest said with tears welling up in his eyes at the sight of them, "Poor things! You two have been caught too. Where's Wukong?"

"When he saw we'd been caught he ran away," Friar Sand replied.

"Wherever he has gone he will certainly have gone to fetch help," said the Tang Priest. "But who knows when we will be delivered?" Master and disciples felt thoroughly miserable.

The story tells how Brother Monkey rode his somersault cloud back to the Clouds of Compassion Monastery, where the monks met him with the question, "Have you been able to rescue Lord Tang?"

"It's difficult," said Monkey, "very difficult. Those three evil spirits have tremendous magical powers, and when we three had fought them for a long time they called up their underlings to capture Pig and Friar Sand. I was lucky to get away."

"My lord," said the monks with horror, "if someone who can ride mists and clouds as you can couldn't catch them, your master is bound to be killed."

"No problem," Monkey replied, "no problem. My master's under the secret protection of the Protectors, the Guardians, the Dings and the Jias. He has besides eaten Grass – returning Cinnabar. I'm sure his life will be safe. The only trouble is that those demons really know their stuff. You people look after the horse and the luggage while I go up to Heaven to get some troops."

"Can you go up to Heaven, my lord?" asked the terrified monks.

"I used to live there," replied Monkey with a smile. "Because I wrecked the Peach Banquet when I was Great Sage Equaling Heaven, our Buddha subdued me, so that now I've no option but to redeem my crimes by guarding the Tang Priest while he fetches the scriptures. All along the journey I've been helping the good and fighting against the evil. What you don't realize is that the master is fated to have these troubles." When the monks heard this they kowtowed in worship, while Monkey went outside and disappeared with a whistle.

The splendid Great Sage was soon outside the Western Gate of Heaven, where the Metal Planet, Heavenly King Virudhaka and the four spirit officers Yin, Zhu, Tao and Xu were talking to each other. As soon as they saw Monkey coming they hastily bowed to him and said, "Where are you going, Great Sage?"

"After we reached Mintian County in Jinping Prefecture on the Eastern borders of India," Monkey replied,

"my master, the Tang Priest who I'm escorting, was being entertained by the monks of the Clouds of Compassion Monastery for the Full Moon Festival. When we went to the Bridge of Golden Lamps there were three golden lamps full of over fifty thousand ounces of silver's worth of scented refined butter oil that the Buddhas came down to take every year. While we were admiring the lamps three Buddha images did come Chapter 92

down to earth, and my master was gullible enough to go on the bridge to worship them. I told him they were a bad lot, but by then the lamps had been covered up and the master carried off with the oil by a wind. When I'd followed the wind till dawn I reached a mountain, where the four Duty Gods fortunately told me that it was called Green Dragon Mountain with a Dark Essence Cave in it where three monsters lived: King Cold – avoider, King Heat – avoider and King Dust – avoider. I

hurried to their doors to demand the master and fought them for a while without success, so I got in by transforming myself to find the master locked up but unharmed. I released him and was just taking him out when they woke up and I had to flee again. Later I fought hard against them with Pig and Friar Sand, but the two of them were both captured and tied up. That's why I've come up to inform the Jade Emperor, find out about the monsters' background and ask him to give orders to have them suppressed."

At this the Metal Planet burst out laughing and said, "If you've been fighting the monsters why can't you tell where they're from?"

"I can see that," Monkey replied. "They're a bunch of rhino spirits. But they have such enormous magical powers that I can't beat them and I'm desperate."

"They are three rhinoceros spirits," the Metal Planet explained. "Because their form is seen in heaven they cultivated their awareness for many years and became true spirits able to fly on clouds and walk in mists.

Those monsters are fanatical about cleanliness and don't like the look of their own bodies, and are always going into the water to bathe. They have lots of different names: there are she–rhinos, he–rhinos, gelded rhinos, spotted rhinos, *humao* rhinos, *duoluo* rhinos and heaven–connected brindled rhinos. They all have a single nostril, three types of hair and two horns. They roam the rivers and seas and can travel through water. It looks as though Cold–avoider, Heat–avoider and Dust–avoider have nobility in their horns, which is why they call themselves kings. If you want to catch them, they will submit to the four beast stars belonging to the element wood."

"Which four wood stars?" Monkey asked. "Could I trouble you, venerable sir, to spell it out for me?"

"Those stars are spread out in space outside the Dipper and Bull Palace," the planet replied with a smile. "If you submit a memorial to the Jade Emperor he will give you detailed instructions." Raising his clasped hands as he expressed his thanks, Monkey went straight in through the heavenly gates.

He was soon outside the Hall of Universal Brightness, where he saw the heavenly teachers Ge, Qiu, Zhang and Xu, who asked, "Where are you going?"

"We've just reached Jinping Prefecture," Monkey replied, "where my

master relaxed his dhyana nature by going to enjoy the Moon Festival lanterns and was carried off by evil monsters. As I can't subdue them myself I've come to ask the Jade Emperor to save him." The four heavenly teachers then took Monkey to the Hall of Miraculous Mist to submit his memorial, and when all the ceremonials had been performed he explained his business. The Jade Emperor then asked which units of heavenly soldiers he wanted to help him.

"When I arrived at the Western Gate of Heaven just now," Monkey replied, "the Metal Planet told me they were rhinoceros spirits that could only be subdued by the four beast stars belonging to the element wood." The Jade Emperor then told Heavenly Teacher Xu to go to the Dipper and Bull Palace with Monkey to fetch the four beast stars and take them down to the lower world to make the capture.

By the time they arrived outside the Dipper and Bull Palace the Twenty–eight Constellations were there to greet them. "We are here by imperial command to order four beast stars belonging to the element wood to go down to the lower world with the Great Sage Sun," the heavenly teacher explained. The Wooden Lesser Dragon of the Constellation Horn, the Wooden Unicorn of the Dipper, the Wooden Wolf of the Strider, and Chapter 92

the Wooden Hyena of the Well all stepped forward from the side to ask, "Where are you sending us to subdue demons, Great Sage?"

"So you're the ones," said Brother Monkey with a smile. "That old man Metal Planet kept your names secret, and I didn't realize what he was driving at. If he'd told me before that it was you four wooden animals from the Twenty–eight Constellations I'd have come here to invite you myself: there'd have been no need to trouble His Majesty for an edict."

"What a thing to say, Great Sage," the four wooden animals replied. "We'd never have dared to leave on our own authority in the absence of an imperial decree. Where are they? Let's go right away."

"They are rhinoceros spirits in the Dark Essence Cave in Green Dragon Mountain to the Northeast of Jinping Prefecture."

"If they're really rhinoceros spirits," said the Wooden Unicorn of the Dipper, the Wooden Wolf of the Strider and the Wooden Lesser

Dragon of the Horn, "you'll only need Wooden Hyena from the Well Constellation.

He can eat tigers on mountains and capture rhinos in the sea."

"But these aren't ordinary rhinos who gaze at the moon," replied Monkey. "They have cultivated their conduct and found the Way and are a thousand years old. All four of you gentlemen must come: no excuses. If one of you can't capture them single-handed it'll be wasted effort."

"You people are talking nonsense," the heavenly teacher added. "The imperial command is that all four of you go, so go you must. Fly there at once while I report back." The heavenly teacher then took his leave of Monkey and went.

"Delay no more, Great Sage," the four wooden ones said. "You challenge them to battle and lure them out so we can come from behind you and get them." Monkey then went up to the cave and shouted abusively,

"Oil-thieving ogres! Give my master back!" The doors, which Pig had smashed open, had been barricaded with a few planks by a number of junior devils, and when they heard his insults they rushed inside to report,

"Your Majesties, the monk Sun is outside insulting us again."

"We beat him and he ran away," said Dust-avoider, "so why's he back again today? I think he must have got some reinforcements from somewhere."

"We're not scared of any reinforcements he could get," said Cold-avoider and Heat-avoider scornfully. "Let's get into our armor at once. Little ones, surround him carefully and don't let him get away." Not caring about their lives, the evil spirits came out of the cave holding spears and swords, with banners waving and drums beating. "Back again, are you, macaque?" they shouted at Brother Monkey. "Not afraid of another beating?"

Nothing infuriated Monkey so much as the word "macaque," and he was grinding his teeth in rage as he lifted his cudgel to hit them. The three demon kings brought their junior devils up to surround him, at which the four wooden beasts who were waiting to one side swung their weapons with shouts of, "Don't move, animals!"

The three demon kings were of course most alarmed at the sight of the four stars, and they all said, "This is terrible, terrible. He's found the people who can beat us. Run for your lives, little ones!" With that there was much roaring, lowing, panting and sighing as the junior devils all resumed their original appearances as yak, water – buffalo and ox spirits running all over the mountain. The three demon kings also turned back into their true selves, put their hands down to become four – hoofed creatures like iron cannons, and galloped off to the Northeast, to be followed hard by the Great Sage leading the Wooden Hyena of the Well and the Wooden Chapter 92

Lesser Dragon of the Horn. While they were not going to relax for a moment, the Wooden Unicorn of the Dipper and the Wooden Wolf of the Strider were mopping up all the cattle spirits among the hollows, summits, ravines and valleys of the Eastern mountain. Some were killed and others taken alive. They then went into the Dark Essence Cave to free the Tang Priest, Pig and Friar Sand.

Recognizing the two stars, Friar Sand bowed to them in thanks and asked, "What brought you two gentlemen here to rescue us?"

"We came to rescue you because the Great Sage Monkey submitted a request to the Jade Emperor that we be sent," the two stars replied.

"Why has my disciple Wukong not come in?" the Tang Priest asked with tears in his eyes.

"The three old demons are rhinoceroses," the stars explained, "and when they saw us they fled for their lives to the Northeast. The Great Sage Sun has gone after them with the Wooden Hyena of the Well and the Wooden Lesser Dragon of the Horn. We two wiped out the oxen then came here to rescue you, holy monk."

The Tang Priest once again kowtowed in thanks then kowtowed to heaven.

"Master," said Pig, "overdone courtesy is hypocrisy. Stop kowtowing all the time. The four star officers came at the Jade Emperor's command and as a favour to big brother. The ordinary demons have all been wiped out, but we still don't know how the senior demons are to be put down. Let's clear all the valuables out of the cave, wreck the place so as to dig out their roots, then go back to the monastery to

wait for Monkey."

"Marshal Tian Peng, your suggestion is right," said the Wooden Wolf of the Strider. "You and the Curtain—lifting General escort your master back to the monastery to sleep while we head Northeast to fight the enemy."

"Yes, yes," said Pig. "With you two to help you're bound to wipe them all out. Then you'll be able to report back on your mission." The two star officers immediately joined the chase. After Pig and Friar Sand had found a bushel of valuables in the cave——there was much coral, agate, pearls, amber, precious shells, jade and gold——they carried them outside and invited the master to sit on the top of a crag while they started a fire that burned the whole cave to ashes. Only then did they take the master back to the Clouds of Compassion Monastery in Jinping Prefecture. Indeed:

The classic says, "Disaster comes at the height of success."

Indeed one can meet with evil in happiness.

For love of the lanterns the dhyana nature was disturbed;

The heart set on the Way was weakened by a beautiful sight.

The great elixir has always had to be permanently guarded;

Once it is lost one always comes to grief.

Shut it up tight; bind it fast; never idle.

A moment's lack of care can lead one astray.

Chapter 92

1288

Journey to the West

We will tell not of how the three of them went back to the monastery, their lives saved, but of how the Wooden Unicorn of the Dipper and the Wooden Wolf of the Strider were riding their clouds Northeast in pursuit of the demons when they lost sight of them in mid air. On reaching the Western Ocean they saw the Great Sage Monkey down by the sea a long way away, shouting.

"Where have the monsters gone, Great Sage?" they asked, bringing

their clouds down. "Why didn't you two come after them and help put them down?" Monkey replied. "How can you have the nerve to ask that question?"

"When we saw that you and the stars from the Well and the Horn had routed the demons and were going after them, Great Sage," the Wooden Unicorn of the Dipper replied, "we were sure you'd capture them, so we two wiped out the rest of the devils, rescued your master and fellow–disciples from the cave, searched the mountain, burned the cave out, and entrusted your master to your two fellow–disciples to take back to the Clouds of Compassion Monastery in the city. We only came after you this way when you had been gone for such a long time."

"In that case you did very well," said Brother Monkey, his wrath now turned to pleasure. "Thank you for going to so much trouble. The only thing is that when we'd chased the three ogres this far they plunged into the sea. The two stars from the Well and the Horn followed close behind them while I stayed on the shore to cut off their escape. Now you're here you can block them on the shore while I go there."

The splendid Great Sage then swung his cudgel and made a spell with his fingers as he cleared a way through the waters, plunging deep into the waves, where the three monsters were locked in a life–and–death struggle with the Wooden Hyena of the Well and the Wooden Lesser Dragon of the Horn.

"Monkey's here," he shouted, springing forward. The evil spirits could barely hold off the two star officers, so when they heard Monkey's great yell at this moment of crisis they turned and fled for their lives into the middle of the sea. Their horns were very good at parting the waters, and they cleared their way through the sea with a whooshing noise, the two star officers and the Great Sage Monkey chasing after them.

A yaksha who was patrolling the Western Ocean with a shelled warrior saw from a distance the way the rhinoceroses were parting the waters, recognized Monkey and the two stars, and rushed back to the crystal palace to report to the dragon king in alarm, "Your Majesty, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven and two stars from the sky are chasing three rhinoceroses this way." When the old dragon king Ao Shun heard this he said to his heir, Prince Mo'ang, "Muster our water forces at once. I'm sure it must be the three rhinoceros spirits Cold–avoider, Heat–avoider and Dust–avoider who've provoked Sun the Novice. As they're in the sea now we'd better lend a hand." Having

been given his orders Ao Mo'ang hastened to muster his troops.

A moment later a fully – armed force of tortoises, soft – shelled turtles, alligators, bream, mackerel, mandarin fish, carp, and prawn and crab soldiers charged out of the crystal palace shouting their battle – cries together to stop the rhinoceros spirits. Unable to go any further forward, the rhinoceroses made a hasty retreat, only to find their escape blocked by the stars from the Well and the Horn as well as the Great Sage. In their panic they failed to stay in a group, but scattered as they fled for their lives. Dust – avoider was soon surrounded by the old dragon king's men.

A delighted Monkey called out, "Stop! Stop! Take him alive! Don't kill him!" When Mo'ang heard this order he rushed forward, knocked Dust – avoider to the ground, put an iron hook through his snout and tied all his hoofs together.

Chapter 92

1289

Journey to the West

The old dragon king then divided his forces into two to help the star officers capture the other two monsters.

As the young dragon prince led his men forward the Wooden Hyena of the Well reverted to his real form to hold Cold – avoider down and start eating him in big and little bites.

"Well Star!" Mo'ang shouted. "Don't kill him! The Great Sage Monkey wants him alive, not dead." Mo'ang shouted several times, but by then the Hyena had already gnawed right through the monster's throat.

Mo'ang ordered his prawn and crab soldiers to carry the dead rhinoceros back to the palace of crystal, then joined the Wooden Hyena of the Well in the pursuit. Heat – avoider, who was being driven back towards them by the Wooden Lesser Dragon of the Horn, ran straight into the star from the Well, at which Mo'ang ordered his tortoises, soft – shelled turtles and alligators to spread out in the winnowing – fan formation to encircle the monster.

"Spare me, spare me!" the monster pleaded. The wooden Hyena of the Well sprang forward, grabbed the monster by the ear, seized his sword, and shouted, "I won't kill you. I won't kill you. I'll take you to the Great Sage Monkey for him to deal with you."

The troops then went back to the crystal palace, where they reported, "We've got them both." Monkey saw that one was lying headless and gory on the ground, while the other was being forced to kneel by the Wooden Hyena of the Well twisting his ear.

"That head wasn't cut off with a weapon," Monkey said on going up for a closer look.

"If I hadn't shouted so hard the star officer of the Well would have eaten the whole of him up," replied Mo'ang with a smile. "Very well then," said Monkey.

"In that case you'd better get a saw to cut off his horns and have his hide removed for us to take. We'll leave the flesh for your worthy father the dragon king and yourself to enjoy." A chain was then run through Dust–avoider's nose for the Wooden Lesser Dragon of the Horn to lead him by, and the same was done to Heat–avoider for the Wooden Hyena of the Well.

"Take them to the prefect of Jinping," said Monkey. "Investigate them, question them about all the years they masqueraded as Buddhas to harm the people, then off with their heads."

They all then did as Monkey told them, taking their leave of the dragon king and his son and emerging from the Western Ocean, leading the rhinoceroses with them. When they met the other two stars from the Strider and the Dipper they went by cloud straight back to Jinping Prefecture.

Here Monkey called out as he stood in mid air on a beam of auspicious light, "Mr. Prefect, subordinate officials, soldiers and civilians of Jinping, listen to what I say. We are holy monks sent by the Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. In this prefecture and its counties you have had to make offerings in golden lamps every year to these rhinoceros monsters pretending to be Buddhas coming down to earth. When we came here and were admiring the lamps at the Moon Festival these monsters carried the oil and our master off together. I asked for some gods from heaven to capture them. We've cleaned out their cave and wiped out the monsters. They won't be able to give you any more trouble. You needn't waste the people's money making offerings in golden lamps here any more."

When Pig and Friar Sand, who were just escorting the master back into the Clouds of Compassion Monastery, heard Monkey talking from

up in the sky they abandoned their master, dropped the luggage and shot up into the air by cloud to ask Monkey about how the demons had been beaten.

Chapter 92

1290

Journey to the West

"One of them was chewed to death by the star from the Well," Monkey replied, "and we've got his sawn – off horns and his hide with us. The other two we've brought back alive."

"Throw the pair of them down into the city," said Pig, "for the officials and everyone else to see. Then they'll know we're gods and sages. I'll trouble you four star officers to put your clouds away, land, and come into the prefectural court with us to execute the monsters. The facts are clear and the penalty's the right one. There's nothing else to be said."

"Marshal Tian Peng is right, and he knows the laws too," the four stars said.

"I have learned a bit during my years as a monk," Pig replied.

The gods then pushed the rhinoceroses, which fell wreathed in coloured clouds into the prefectural court, to the astonishment of the prefectutal officials and everyone else inside and outside the walled city, who all set up incense tables outside their houses, and bowed their heads to worship the gods from heaven. A little later the monks of the Clouds of Compassion Monastery carried the venerable elder into the court in a sedan chair.

When Sanzang met Monkey he kept thanking him, adding, "I am very grateful for the trouble I have put the star officers to in rescuing us. I had been very anxious when I did not see you, worthy disciple, but now you have returned in triumph. I wonder where you had to chase the monsters to before you caught them."

"After I left you the day before yesterday," Monkey replied, "I went up to heaven to make some enquiries.

The Metal Planet knew that the monsters were rhinoceroses, so he told me to ask for the four beast stars that belong to the element wood. So I submitted a memorial to the Jade Emperor and he sent them straight

to the mouth of the cave, where they gave battle. When the demon kings fled, the stars from the Dipper and the Strider rescued you, Master, I chased the demons with the Well and the Horn stars straight to the Western Ocean, where the dragon king sent his son out with their troops to help us. That's how the monsters were captured and brought here for questioning." The venerable elder was full of endless praise and thanks. The prefectural and county officials and their subordinates all lit precious candles and whole containers of incense sticks as they kowtowed in respect,

A little later Pig lost his temper, pulled out his monastic knife and beheaded first Dust – avoider, then Heat – avoider, each with a single stroke. Then he removed their four horns with a saw. The Great Sage Monkey then had another suggestion to make: "You four star officers must take these four rhinoceros horns to the upper world to offer to the Jade Emperor as trophies when you report back on your mission." As for the two horns he had brought back from the sea, he said, "We'll leave one here to guard the storehouses of the prefectural palace and as evidence that from now on no more lamp – oil will ever be levied. We'll take the other to offer to the Lord Buddha on Vulture Peak." The four stars were delighted, and after bowing to take their leave of the Great Sage they rose by coloured cloud to report back to the Jade Emperor.

The prefectural and county officials kept the master and his disciples for a great vegetarian banquet to which all the rural officials were also invited. Notices were issued to tell the military and civil population that golden lamps were not to be lit the next year, and that the duty of serving as an oil – purchasing household was abolished for ever. Butchers meanwhile were instructed to remove the rhinoceros skins to be steeped in saltpeter and smoked dry for making into armor, while the flesh was to be distributed to the officials. At the same time money and grain that had been raised by unjust fines on innocent people were spent to buy a plot of privately – owned empty land. On this a temple to the four stars who had put the demons down, as well as a shrine to the Tang Priest and his three disciples, were to be built. Stone tablets with inscriptions were to be set up for each of them to record their deeds for ever as a mark of gratitude.

Chapter 92

1291

Journey to the West

Master and disciples relaxed and enjoyed the offerings. They had hardly a moment to themselves as they had so many invitations from the 240 lamp－oil households. Pig was delighted to have so much to eat, and he always kept in his sleeve some of the treasures he had collected in the cave to give to all his hosts to thank them for their banquets. When they had stayed there for a month and were still unable to get away the Tang Priest ordered Monkey.

"Wukong, give all the remaining valuables to the monks in the Clouds of Compassion Monastery. Let's leave before dawn, without letting the rich families here know. If we are so eager to enjoy ourselves here that we delay in fetching the scriptures we may offend the Lord Buddha and cause some catastrophe. That would be terrible." Monkey then disposed of all the objects.

When they got up early the next morning at the fifth watch Pig was woken up to get the horse ready. The idiot had eaten and drunk so well that he was still half asleep as he said, "Why get the horse ready so early?"

"The master says we've got to be going," Monkey shouted.

"That reverend gentleman doesn't do things right," the idiot said, rubbing his eyes. "We've had invitations from all 240 of the big families, but only had thirty or so good vegetarian meals so far. How can he be making me go hungry again?"

When the venerable elder heard this he retorted abusively, "Dreg －guzzling idiot! Stop talking such nonsense!

Get up at once! If you go on arguing back like that I'll tell Wukong to smash your teeth in with his gold－banded cudgel."

At the mention of a beating the idiot gesticulated frantically as he said, "The master's changed. Usually he favours me and likes me and protects me because I'm so stupid. When you want to hit me, brother, he usually persuades you not to. So why's he dead set on telling you to hit me today?"

"The master's angry with you for being so greedy," Monkey replied, "and holding us up on our journey. If you don't want me to hit you, pack the luggage and get the horse ready."

As the idiot really was scared of being hit he jumped out of bed, got dressed and shouted to Friar Sand, "Get up right now! He's going to start hitting." Friar Sand then jumped up too, and they both got

everything packed.

"Keep quiet," said the Tang Priest, waving his hands about, "and don't disturb the monks." He quickly mounted, after which they opened the gate of the monastery and found their way out. Indeed, this departure was

Letting the phoenix escape from the birdcage of jade;

Secretly opening locks so the dragon goes free.

If you don't know what the households who still wanted to thank them did at daybreak, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 92

1292

Journey to the West

Chapter 93

In the Almsgiver's Garden Antiquity and Causes Are Discussed

In the Court of India the King Meets the Monks

When thoughts arise there surely will be desire,

Longing is certain to lead one to disaster.

Why should intelligence distinguish the three ranks of nobility?

When conduct is complete it naturally returns to the primal sea.

Whether you become an immortal or a Buddha,

All must be arranged from within.

In absolute purity, with all dust removed,

All will be achieved and one will rise to heaven.

The story tells how when Sanzang and his disciples were nowhere to be seen at dawn the monks in the Clouds of Compassion Monastery all said, "We couldn't keep them, we couldn't say goodbye to them, and we weren't able to ask them for anything. We've let those living Bodhisattvas slip clean away."

As they were talking, some of the great families from the Southern outskirts of the city came in with invitations, at which the monks clapped their hands in regret and said, "We were caught off our guard last night: they all rode off by cloud." Everyone then kowtowed to heaven in gratitude. The news was spread to all the officials in the city, who told the great families to prepare the five kinds of sacrificial animal, flowers and fruit to offer to the shrines in thanksgiving.

The story tells how the Tang Priest and his three disciples fed on the wind and slept in the open, travelling uneventfully for the best part of a month. One day they suddenly saw a high mountain. "Disciples," said the Tang Priest in fear, "the ridge in front of us is very steep. You must be very careful."

"As our journey has brought us so close to the land of the Buddha there will definitely be nothing evil here,"

said Monkey. "Don't worry, Master."

"Disciple," the Tang Priest replied, "although we are not far from the Buddha's land the monks told us in the monastery the other and they didn't know how much further after that."

"Have you forgotten the *Heart Sutra* that the Rook's Nest Hermit taught you again, Master?" asked Monkey.

"The *Prajna—paramita Heart Sutra* is constantly with me, like my habit and begging bowl," Sanzang replied.

"There has not been a day ever since the Rook's Nest Hermit taught it to me that I have not recited it. I have never forgotten it for a moment. I can even recite it backwards. How could I possibly forget it?"

"You can only recite it, Master," said Monkey. "You never asked the hermit to explain it."

"Ape!" retorted Sanzang. "How can you say I don't understand it? Do you understand it then?"

"Yes," Monkey replied, "I do."

After that neither Sanzang nor Monkey made another sound. This had Pig falling about with laughter, while Friar Sand was hurting himself, he was so amused.

"Nonsense," said Pig. "We all started out in life as monsters. We're not Dhyana monks who've heard the sutras being explained or Buddhist priests who've been taught the dharma. He's pretending, just putting on an act.

How can you say you understand? Well then, why aren't you saying anything? We're listening. Please explain."

"Second brother," said Friar Sand, "leave him be. Big brother's only talking big like that to keep the master going. What he knows about is how to use a cudgel. What does he know about explaining sutras?"

"Stop talking such nonsense, Wuneng and Wujing," said Sanzang. "Wukong understands the wordless language. That is true explanation."

As master and disciples talked they did indeed cover a long distance, leaving the ridge behind them. They saw a big monastery beside the road. "Wukong," said Sanzang. "There's a monastery ahead. Just look at it.

It's neither too big nor too small,

But has green glazed tiles;

Neither too new nor too old,

And with a red wall.

Leaning canopies of azure pines can just be seen:

Who knows how many thousand years old they are?

Listen to the murmur of the waters in the channel,

Cut from the mountain untold dynasties ago.

Above the gates is written,

'Spread Gold Dhyana Monastery';

The tablet is inscribed,

'Ancient relic.'"

Chapter 93

1294

Journey to the West

Monkey saw that it was called the Spread Gold Dhyana Monastery, and Pig said so too. "'Spread Gold,'"

Sanzang wondered as he sat on his horse, "'Spread Gold' ...Can we be in the country of Sravasti?"

"This is very remarkable, Master," said Pig. "In all the years I've been with you you've never known the way before, but you seem to know it now."

"No," Sanzang replied, "I have often read in the scriptures about the Buddha being in the Jetavana garden in the city of Sravasti. The Venerable Almsgiver Sudatta tried to buy it from the prince as a place to ask the Buddha to preach in. The prince refused to sell the garden, and said he would only part with it if it were covered with gold. When the Venerable Almsgiver heard this he had gold bricks made with which he covered the whole garden to buy it. Then he invited the Buddha to preach on the dharma. I am sure that the name Spread Gold Monastery must refer to that story."

"We're in luck," said Pig with a smile, "If that story's true we can find ourselves one of those bricks as a present to give people." Everybody laughed, after which Sanzang dismounted.

As they went in through the monastery gates they saw people carrying loads with shoulder–poles or on their backs, pushing carts, or sitting in loaded carts. Others were sleeping or talking. The sight of the master, who was so handsome, and his three hideous disciples rather frightened them, so they drew back to make way.

Worried that his disciples would provoke trouble, Sanzang kept saying, "Behave yourselves! Behave yourselves!" They were all very restrained. As they went round the Vajra Hall a Dhyana monk of most unworldly appearance came out to meet them:

A face like a shining full moon,

A body like a bodhi tree.

The wind blew through the sleeve round his staff,

As his sandals trod the stony path.

When Sanzang extended a monastic greeting to him the monk returned his courtesy and asked, "Where are you from, teacher?"

"I am Chen Xuanzang," Sanzang replied, "sent to the Western Heaven at the command of the Great Tang emperor in the East to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures. As my journey brings me here I am paying you this hasty visit to request a night's shelter before continuing on my way tomorrow."

"This monastery of ours is one that receives people from all quarters," the monk replied. "Everyone is welcome to visit, and we would be especially happy to provide for so holy a monk from the East as your reverend self." Sanzang thanked him and called to his three disciples to come with him as they crossed the cloister and refectory and went to the abbot's lodgings. When they had exchanged courtesies they sat down as befits host and guests. Monkey and the other two sat down as well, their hands at their sides.

The story tells how, on learning that monks from Great Tang in the East who were going to fetch the scriptures had arrived, all in the monastery, young and old alike, whether permanent inmates, itinerant monks, Chapter 93

elders or novices came to see them. After tea had been drunk a vegetarian meal was brought in. While Sanzang was still saying the grace before the meal Pig in his impatience had already grabbed and wolfed down steamed buns, vegetarian dishes and soup noodles. In the crowded abbot's lodgings those who knew better were admiring Sanzang's majestic bearing, while those who enjoyed fun watched Pig eat.

When Friar Sand cast his eyes around and saw what was happening he gave Pig a discreet pinch and muttered,

"Behave yourself!"

At this Pig started a desperate howl of, "All this 'behave yourself, behave yourself!' I'm starving!"

"You don't understand, brother," Friar Sand replied with a smile. "When it comes to the belly, all the well–behaved people in the world are exactly the same as we two." Only then did Pig stop eating. After Sanzang had said the grace for the end of the meal the attendants cleared the tables and Sanzang expressed his thanks.

When the monks asked about why they had come from the East, Sanzang's conversation turned to ancient sites and he asked them about the name Spread Gold Monastery.

"This used to be the Monastery of the Venerable Almsgiver in the country of Sravasti," the monks answered.

"It was also known as the Jetavana and its name was changed to its present one after the Venerable Almsgiver covered the ground with gold bricks, in those days the Venerable Almsgiver used to live in the country of Sravasti, and our monastery was his Jetavana, which is why it was renamed the Almsgiver's Spread Gold Monastery. The site of the Jetavana is at the back of the monastery. Whenever there has been a torrential rainstorm in recent years, small pieces of gold and silver have been washed out, and some people are lucky enough to pick them up."

"So the story is a true one," said Sanzang, going on to ask, "Why did I see so many travelling merchants with horses, mules, carts and carrying–poles resting here when I came in through the gates of your monastery?"

"This mountain is called Mount Hundredfoot," the monks replied. "We used to live in peace and prosperity here, but with the cyclic progression of the natural forces a number of centipede spirits have for some inexplicable reason appeared. They attack people on the roads and though nobody gets killed people don't dare to travel. At the foot of the mountain there's a Cock–crow Pass that people only dare to cross after cock–crow. As all these strangers arrived late they are worried that it would not be safe and are putting up here tonight. They'll set out at cock–crow." As master and disciples were talking a vegetarian meal was brought in that they ate.

Sanzang and Monkey were strolling in the light of the rising half moon when a lay brother came to announce,

"Our ancient master would like to meet the gentlemen from China."

Sanzang at once turned to see an ancient monk holding a bamboo cane who came forward to greet him and ask, "Are you the teacher come from China?"

"You do me too great an honour," Sanzang replied, returning his greeting. The old monk was full of admiration for him, asking how old he was.

"I have wasted forty – five years," Sanzang replied. "May I ask how old you are?"

"Just one sixty – year cycle older than you, teacher," the other answered.

"Then you're a hundred and five this year," Brother Monkey said. "How old do you think I am?"

"Teacher," the old monk replied, "your appearance seems so ancient and your spirit so pure that I could not tell in a hurry, especially by moonlight with my poor eyes." After talking for a while they walked to the back cloister for a look round.

"Where is the site of the Almsgiver's Garden that you mentioned just now?" Sanzang asked.

"Outside the back gate," the other replied. On the order being given for the back gate to be opened immediately, all that could be seen was the ruined base of a stone wall. Putting his hands together, Sanzang sighed and said,

"I think of the benefactor Sudatta

Who gave his treasures to help the needy

The fame of Jetavana long endures;

Where is he now with the enlightened arhat?"

After a leisurely stroll enjoying the moonlight they sat down for a while on a terrace, where they heard the sound of sobbing. As Sanzang listened with a still heart he could hear that the weeper was

grieving because her parents did not know of her suffering. This moved him to sorrow, and he found himself in tears as he turned to the monks and asked, "Who is it being so sad, and where?" On hearing this question the ancient monk sent all the others away to prepare tea, and when nobody else was around he kowtowed to the Tang Priest and Brother Monkey.

"Venerable abbot," said Sanzang, helping him to his feet again, "why do you pay me this courtesy?"

"As I am over a hundred," the ancient monk replied, "I do know a little of the ways of the world; and in between periods of meditation and stillness I have seen some things. I know a certain amount about you, my lord, and your disciples, and you are not like other people. The only teachers here who would be able to analyze this most painful business are you."

"Tell me what it's all about," said Monkey.

"A year ago today," the ancient monk replied, "I was concentrating my mind on the nature of the moon when I suddenly heard a gust of wind and the sound of someone grieving. I got out of bed, went into the Jetavana and saw a beautiful girl there. 'Whose daughter are you?' I asked her. 'Why are you here?' 'I am a princess, the daughter of the king of India,' the girl replied. 'The wind blew me here when I was looking at the flowers by moonlight.' I locked her up in an empty room that I bricked up like a prison cell, just leaving a gap in the door big enough to pass a bowl through. That day I told the other monks that she was an evil spirit I had captured.

But as we monks are compassionate I couldn't kill her, and every day she is given two meals of simple food and drink to keep her alive. The girl is clever enough to understand what I mean, and to prevent herself from being sullied by the other monks she has pretended to be deranged and slept in her own piss and shit. During the day she talks nonsense or just sits there in silence, but in the still of the night she cries because she misses her parents. I've been into the city several times to make enquiries about the princesses, but not a single one is missing. So I have put her under stronger locks, and I am even more determined not to let her go. Now that you have come here, teacher, I beg you to go to the capital and use your dharma powers to find out the truth.

Chapter 93

You will thus be able both to rescue the good and display your magical powers."

When Sanzang and Monkey heard this they noted it very carefully. As they were talking two junior monks came in to invite them to take tea and go to bed, so they went back inside.

Back in the abbot's lodgings Pig and Friar Sand were grumbling, "We'll have to be on our way at cock—crow tomorrow, so why aren't you in bed yet?"

"What's that you're saying, idiot?" Monkey asked.

"Go to bed," Pig replied. "Why are you admiring the blooming scenery this late?" At this the ancient monk left them, and the Tang Priest went to bed.

Sweet dreams of flowers in the moonlit silence;

Warm breezes coming through the window gauze.

As water drips in the clepsydra to fill three sections,

The Milky Way shines on the splendors of the palace.

They had not slept long that night when they heard the cocks crowing. The traders in front of the monastery all got up noisily and prepared their breakfast by lamplight. The venerable elder woke up Pig and Friar Sand to bridle the horse and pack up, while Monkey called for lamps to be lit. The monks of the monastery, who were up already, set out tea, soup and snacks, and waited on them. Pig ate a plate of steamed buns with delight then took the luggage and the horse outside while Sanzang and Brother Monkey took their leave of all the monks.

"Please don't forget about that very tragic business," said the ancient monk.

"I'll give it all my attention," Monkey replied, "all my attention. Once I'm in the city I'll be able to find out the truth from what I hear and see." They traders noisily set off together. By the last watch of the night they were through Cockcrow Pass, and by ten in the morning

the walls of the city were in sight. It was indeed a powerful city as strong as an iron cauldron, the heavenly capital of a divine region. The city Was a crouching tiger or a coiled dragon on high ground,

Colorful with its phoenix towers and unicorn halls.

The waters of the royal moat encircled it like a belt;

In his mountainside paradise were many a monument.

The morning sun lit up banners by the high – way;

Chapter 93

1298

Journey to the West

The spring wind carried the sound of pipes and drums across the bridges.

The wise king was dressed in robes and crown,

The crops were abundant and the splendor manifest.

That day they reached the streets of the Eastern market, where the traders all put up at inns. As Sanzang and his disciples were walking in the city they came to a government hostel and went inside. The hostel manager went to report to the hostel superintendent that there were four strange – looking monks outside who had arrived with a white horse. On being told about the horse the superintendent realized that they must be on an official mission, so he went out to welcome them.

"I have been sent by the Tang court in the East to the Great Thunder Monastery on Vulture Peak to see the Buddha and seek the scriptures," Sanzang replied with a bow. "I have a passport to present at court for inspection. I would be grateful if I could spend the night in Your Excellency's distinguished hostel. I will be on my way when my business has been done."

"This hostel has been established to entertain envoys and travelers," the superintendent replied, returning his bow, "so it is only right that we should entertain you. Please come in, please come in."

A delighted Sanzang invited his disciples to come in to meet the superintendent, who was quietly appalled by their hideous faces. He

did not know whether they were men or demons, so he trembled as he saw to tea and a vegetarian meal for them. Noticing his fright, Sanzang said, "Don't be afraid, Your Excellency. My three disciples look hideous, but they are good at heart. As the saying goes, the faces are ugly but the men are kind.

There's nothing to be afraid of about them."

The hostel superintendent's worries were eased when he heard this. "Where is your Tang court, Teacher of the Nation?"

"In the land of China in the continent of Jambu," Sanzang replied.

"When did you leave home?" was the next question.

"In the thirteenth year of *Zhenguan,* fourteen years ago," Sanzang replied. "I had to cross thousands of rivers and mountains— —it was very hard— —to arrive here."

"You are a holy monk," the hostel superintendent said.

"How old is your exalted dynasty?" Sanzang asked.

"This is the great land of India," the superintendent replied, "and the dynasty has endured for over five hundred years since our High Ancestor. Our reigning sovereign, who is a lover of landscapes and flowers, is known as the Happy Emperor. His reign—period is called *Jingyan* and is now in its twenty—eighth year."

"I would like to have an audience with His Majesty today to have the passport inspected and returned," said Sanzang. "When does he hold court?"

"Splendid," the superintendent said, "absolutely splendid. Today is the twentieth birthday of Her Royal Highness, the king's daughter. A decorated tower has been built at the crossroads, where the princess is going Chapter 93

to throw down an embroidered ball to let heaven decide who her husband it to be. Today is a very lively one, and I believe that His Majesty will not yet have finished his morning audience. This would be a good time to go if you wish to have your passport inspected and

returned." Sanzang was just about to set happily off when the meal was brought in, so he ate it with the superintendent, Monkey and the other two.

By now it was past midday, and Sanzang said, "I had better be going."

"I'll escort you, Master," said Brother Monkey. "Me too," said Pig.

"No, don't, brother," put in Friar Sand. "Your face is nothing much to look at, so there's no point in your going to look impressive outside the palace gates. Best let our big brother go,"

"Wujing is right," Sanzang commented. "The idiot is coarse and stupid. Wukong is more clever and subtle."

The idiot thrust his snout out and said, "Apart from you, Master, there's not much to choose between our three faces."

Sanzang then put on his cassock. Monkey took the passport case had accompanied him. In the streets everyone — —gentleman, peasant; artisan, trader, scholar, pen—pusher, dim—wit, or common man— —was exclaiming, "Let's go and see the embroidered ball being thrown."

Sanzang stood beside the road and said to Monkey, "People, clothes, buildings, language and speech here are all the same as in our Great Tang. I remember that my late mother married after throwing an embroidered ball to make the match she was destined for, and they have that custom here too."

"What about us going to take a look too?" asked Monkey.

"No, no," Sanzang replied. "We are not wearing the right clothes for the occasion. We might arouse suspicion."

"Master," said Monkey, "you've forgotten what the ancient monk in the Spread Gold Monastery told us. We could find out whether she is genuine or not while we're taking a good look at the decorated tower. With all this bustle and activity the king is bound to be going to hear the princess's good news. He won't bother with court business. Let's go." On hearing this Sanzang did indeed go with Monkey. All kinds of people were there to watch the throwing of the embroidered ball. Oh dear! Little did they know that by going they were like a fisherman casting his hook and line and catching himself trouble.

The story now explains that two years earlier the king of India had

taken his queen, consorts and daughter into the royal garden to enjoy a moonlit night because he so loved landscapes and flowers. This had provoked an evil spirit, who had carried the princess off and turned herself into the girl's double. When she learned that the Tang Priest was coming at this time, day, month and year the evil spirit had used the wealth of the kingdom to build the decorated tower in the hope of winning him as her mate and absorbing his true masculine primal essence to make herself a superior immortal of the Great Monad.

At the third mark of the noonday hour, when Sanzang and Monkey had joined in the crowd and were approaching the tower, the princess lit some incense and prayed to heaven and earth. She was surrounded by five or six dozen exquisitely made—up beauties who were attending her and holding her embroidered ball for her. The tower had many windows on all sides. As the princess looked around she saw the Tang Priest approaching, so she took the embroidered ball and threw it with her own hands at the Tang Priest's head. It knocked his Vairocana mitre askew, giving him such a start that he immediately reached with both hands to Chapter 93

steady the ball, which rolled down his sleeve.

At once there were great shouts from everyone on the tower of, "She's hit a monk! She's hit a monk!"

Oh dear! All the travelling merchants at the crossroads pushed and shouted as they rushed to grab the embroidered ball, to be met by Monkey with a shout and bared teeth as he bent forward then grew to the majestic height of thirty feet. The hideous face he made gave them all such a fright that they collapsed and crawled about, not daring to come closer. A moment later they had all scattered and Monkey resumed his true form.

The maids, palace beauties and senior and junior eunuchs who had been in the tower all camp up to the Tang Priest, kowtowed to him and said, "Your Highness, we beg you to come to the palace to be congratulated."

Sanzang was quick to return their greetings and help them all back to their feet.

He then turned back to grumble at Monkey, "Ape! You've been trying

to make a fool of me again."

"It was your head the embroidered ball landed on," Monkey replied with a laugh, "and your sleeve it rolled into. Nothing to do with me, so what are you moaning at me for?"

"What are we going to do?" Sanzang asked.

"Stop worrying, Master," Monkey said. "While you go to the palace to see the king I'll go back to the hostel to tell Pig and Friar Sand to wait. If the princess doesn't want you, that'll be that. You submit the passport and we can be on our way. If the princess insists on marriage you must say to the king, 'Please send for my disciples so that I can take my leave of them.' When we three are summoned to court I'll be able to tell whether the princess is real or an impostor. This is the trick called 'subduing a demon through marriage.'" The Tang Priest had nothing to say as Monkey turned away and went back to the hostel.

The venerable elder was hustled by the palace beauties and the rest of them to the foot of the tower, from where the princess came down to support him with her jade hand as they both entered the royal carriage. The retinue formed a procession to return to the palace gates.

The eunuch gate–officer at once reported to the king, "Your Majesty, Her Royal Highness the princess is outside the Meridional Gate, holding a monk's arm and waiting to be summoned. I expect she hit him with her embroidered ball."

The king was most displeased to hear this, and wanted to have the monk driven away, but as he did not know what the princess had in mind he restrained his feelings and summoned them in. The princess and the Tang Priest came in to stand beneath the throne hall. Indeed:

Man and future wife both hailed the king aloud;

Good and ill together with deep respect kowtowed.

When this ceremonial had been performed they were called into the throne hall, where the king began by asking, "Where are you from, monk? Did our daughter hit you with her ball?"

The Tang Priest prostrated himself to reply, "I have been sent by the emperor of Great Tang in the continent of Jambu to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and seek the scriptures in the Great Thunder Monastery. As I carry a passport for this long journey I was coming to present it for inspection at Your Majesty's dawn audience when I passed a decorated tower at a crossroads, never imagining that Her Royal Highness the princess would throw an embroidered ball that would hit me on the head. As I am a monk and belong to a different faith I could not possibly marry your exquisite daughter, so I beg you to spare me the death penalty and return the passport. Then I can be on my way and soon reach Vulture Peak, see the Buddha, ask for the scriptures and return to my own country, where Your Majesty's divine mercy will be for ever recorded."

"So you are a holy monk from the East," the king replied. "Indeed, 'a thread can draw together a fated match across a thousand miles.' Our princess has reached the age of nineteen and is still unmarried, and as the hour, day, month and year are all now auspicious a decorated tower was set up for her to choose a good husband by throwing the ball from it. You just happened to be hit by it, and although this does not please us we would like to know the princess's views."

"Your Majesty my father," the princess replied, kowtowing, "as the saying goes, 'Marry a cockerel and follow a cockerel; marry a dog and follow a dog.' I swore a vow beforehand, made the ball and told heaven, earth and the gods that heaven would choose as my husband the man my ball hit. As the ball hit the holy monk today this must have been fated ever since an earlier incarnation, which is why we met today. I would never dare to change my mind. I ask you to take him as your son—in—law."

Only then was the king happy, and he commanded the chief royal astrologer to choose a day. While organizing the trousseau the king issued proclamations to the world. When Sanzang heard this, so far from thanking the king for his kindness, he pleaded, "Forgive me, forgive me."

"You're most unreasonable, monk," the king replied. "We offer you a nation's wealth to be our son—in—law.

Why won't you stay here and enjoy yourself? All you can think about is fetching the scriptures. If you go on refusing we will have the palace guards take you out and behead you."

The venerable elder was so frightened by this that his soul left his body as he kowtowed, trembling, and submitted, "I am grateful for Your Majesty's heavenly grace, but there are four of us monks travelling West. I have three disciples outside. If I am now to be taken as your son—in—law I beg you to summon them inside as I have not yet taken my leave of them. Then you can return the passport and let them go at once, so that they will not fail in the purpose of their journey to the West."

The king approved this request, asking, "Where are your disciples?"

"In the government hostel for foreigners," Sanzang replied, and officers were at once sent to fetch the holy monk's disciples to receive the passport and be on their way, leaving the holy monk there to be the princess's husband. The venerable elder could only rise to his feet and stand in attendance.

For the Great Elixir not to leak away the Triple Completeness is needed; Blame an evil fate if the ascetic way is hard.

The Way is in the sage traditions; cultivation depends on the self; Goodness is accumulated by people, but blessings come from Heaven.

Chapter 93

1302

Journey to the West

Do not give play to the six sense—organs and their many desires; Open up the single nature, original and primary.

When there are no attachments or thoughts, purity comes of itself; Strive for liberation and achieve transcendence.

We will say no more of how officers were sent to the hostel to fetch Sanzang's three disciples.

Instead the story tells how Monkey, after taking his leave of Sanzang at the foot of the decorated tower, went happily back to the hostel, laughing aloud as he walked. "Why are you laughing so cheerfully, brother," Pig and Friar Sand asked as they greeted him, "and why's the master disappeared?"

"The master has found happiness," Monkey replied. "What happiness?" Pig asked. "He hasn't reached the end of the journey, he hasn't seen

the Buddha and he hasn't fetched the scriptures."

"The master and I only got as far as the foot of a decorated tower at the crossroads," Brother Monkey replied.

"Just then the king's daughter hit the master with an embroidered ball, so he was hustled by palace beauties, pretty girls and eunuchs to the front of the tower, where he climbed into a carriage to go to the palace with the princess. He's been invited to become the king's son－in－law. Isn't that something to be cheerful about?"

When Pig heard this he stamped, beat his chest and said, "If I'd known beforehand, I'd have gone too. It was all Friar Sand's fault for making trouble. I'd have run straight to the foot of the decorated tower, the embroidered ball would have hit me first time, and the princess would have taken me for her husband. That would have been marvellous, terrific. I'm handsome and good－looking: I'd have been just the man. We'd all have been in luck and have had a good time. It'd have been real fun."

Friar Sand went up to Pig, rubbed his face and said, "Shameless, you're shameless! That's a handsome mug, I must say. You're like the man who bought an old donkey for three－tenths of an ounce of silver and boasted that he'd be able to ride it. If she'd hit you first time she wouldn't have wanted to wait till tonight before burning spells to get rid of you. Do you think she'd have let trouble like you into the palace?"

"You're being very disagreeable, you blacky," Pig replied. "Ugly I may be, but I've got class. As the old saying goes, 'When skin and flesh are coarse, the bones may yet be strong: everyone is good at something.'"

"Stop talking nonsense, idiot," Monkey retorted, "and pack the baggage. I expect the master will get anxious and send for us, so we must be ready to go to protect him at court."

"You're wrong again, brother," said Pig. "If the master's become the king's son－in－law and gone to take his pleasure with the king's daughter, he won't be climbing any more mountains, or tramping along the road, or running into demons and monsters. So what'll he want you to protect him from? He's old enough to know what happens under the bedcovers. He won't need you to hold him up."

Monkey grabbed Pig by the ear, swung his fist, and said abusively, "You're as dirty－minded as ever, you cretin! How dare you talk such nonsense!"

While they were in the middle of their quarrel the hostel superintendent came to report, "His Majesty has sent an official here with a request for you three holy monks to present yourselves."

Chapter 93

1303

Journey to the West

"What's he really asking us to go for?"

"The senior holy monk had the good fortune to be hit by the princess's golden ball and be taken as her husband," the superintendent replied, "which is why the official has come with invitations for you."

"Where is the official?" Monkey asked. "Send him in."

The official then bowed in greeting to Monkey, after which he did not dare look straight at Monkey as he muttered to himself, "Is it a ghost? a monster? a thunder god? a yaksha?"

"Why are you mumbling instead of saying whatever you have to say, official?" Monkey asked.

Trembling with terror, the official raised the royal edict with both hands as his words came tumbling out in confusion: "Her Royal Highness— —invitation— —meet her new relations— —Her Royal Highness— —meet her relations— —invitation...."

"We've got no torture equipment here and we're not going to beat you," Pig said, "so don't be frightened and take your time telling us."

"Do you think he's scared you're going to beat him?" Monkey said. "What he's scared of is your ugly mug. Get the carrying—pole load packed up at once. We're taking the horse and going to court to see the master and talk things over." Indeed:

One you meet on a narrow path is hard to avoid;

Determination can turn love to hatred.

If you do not know what was said when they met the king, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 94

The story tells how Brother Monkey and the other two disciples went with the official who had brought the invitation to outside the Meridional Gate of the palace, where the eunuch gate officer immediately reported their arrival and brought back a summons for them to enter. The three of them stood in a row, not bowing.

"Are you three gentlemen the illustrious disciples of the holy monk? What are your names? Where do you live? Why did you become monks? What scriptures are you going to fetch?" Monkey then came closer, intending to enter the throne hall.

"Don't move," one of the king's bodyguards shouted. "If you have anything to say, say it standing down there."

"We monks like to step forward whenever we're given an opening," Monkey said with a smile, at which Pig Chapter 94

and Friar Sand too approached the king. Worried that their rough manners would alarm the king, Sanzang stepped forward and called out, "Disciples, His Majesty has asked you why you have come here. You must submit your reply."

Seeing his master standing in attendance beside the king, Monkey could not restrain himself from calling aloud, "Your Majesty is treating yourself with respect but others with contempt. If you are taking my master as your son－in－law, why do you make him stand in attendance on you? The normal custom is for a king to call his son－in－law Your Excellency, and an Excellency really ought to be sitting down."

This gave the king so bad a fright that he turned pale and wished he could leave the throne hall. But as this would have looked very bad he had to summon up his courage and tell his attendants of fetch an embroidered stool on which he invited the Tang Priest to sit. Only then did Brother Monkey submit the following spoken memorial: "My ancestral home is the Water Curtain Cave in the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in the land of Aolai in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body.

My father was heaven, my mother earth,

And I was born when a rock split open.

1 took as my master a Taoist adept,

And mastered the Great Way.

Then I returned to my land of immortals,

Where I gathered all of us to live in our cave heaven.

In the ocean's depths I subdued the dragons,

Then climbed the mountains to capture wild beasts.

I removed us from the registers of death,

Put us on the rolls of the living,

And was appointed Great Sage Equaling Heaven.

I enjoyed the heavenly palaces,

And roamed around the splendid buildings.

I met the immortals of Heaven

In daily carousals;

Lived in the holy regions,

Happy every day.

Chapter 94

1305

Journey to the West

But because I disrupted the Peach Banquet,

And raised a rebellion in the palaces of Heaven,

I was captured by the Lord Buddha

And imprisoned under the Five Elements Mountain.

When hungry I was fed on pellets of iron,

When thirsty I drank molten copper:

For five hundred years I tasted no food or tea.

Fortunately my master came from the East

To worship in the West.

Guanyin told him to deliver me from heavenly disaster.

I was rescued from my torment

To be converted to the Yogacarin sect.

My old name was Wukong;

Now I am known as the Novice."

When the king realized how important Monkey was he quickly came down from his dragon throne and walked over to steady the venerable elder with his hand and say, "Son – in – law, it was divine providence that brought us one such as yourself to be our kinsman through marriage." Sanzang thanked the king profoundly for his graciousness and urged him to return to his throne. "Which gentleman has the distinction of being the second disciple?" the king asked. Pig thrust his snout out to make himself look more impressive as he replied:

"In previous lives old Pig used to be

Given to pleasure and indolence.

I lived in confusion,

My nature disordered and my heart deluded.

1 did not know how high the sky was or how deep the earth;

I could not tell the ocean's width or the mountains' distance.

Then in the middle of my idleness

I suddenly met a true immortal.

In half a sentence

He undid the net of evil;

With two or three remarks

He smashed the gate to disaster.

Then I became aware,

Took him as my master on the spot,

Diligently studied the arts of the Double Eight,

Respectfully refined the Triple Three's sequence.

When training was complete I was able to fly,

And ascend to the heavenly palace.

The Jade Emperor in his benevolence

Appointed me as Marshal Tian Peng,

To command the marines of the River of Heaven,

And wander at ease within the palace gates.

Then when I was drunk at the Peach Banquet

I misbehaved with the goddess of the moon,

Was stripped of my commission,

And exiled to the mortal world.

Because I came into the wrong womb

1 was born with the likeness of a pig.

Living at the Mount of Blessing

I committed unbounded evil.

When I met the Bodhisattva Guanyin

She showed me the way of goodness.

I came over to the Buddhist faith

Chapter 94

1307

Journey to the West

To escort the Tang Priest

On his journey to the Western Heaven,

Seeking the marvellous scriptures.

My Dharma name is Wuneng,

And people call me Bajie."

When the king heard this he trembled with fear, not daring to look at him. This made the idiot more spirited than ever, shaking his head, pursing his lips, thrusting his ears up and roaring with laughter.

Sanzang, worried that Pig was giving the king a fright, shouted, "Control yourself, Bajie." Only then did Pig put his hands together and pretend to behave himself.

"And why was the third distinguished disciple converted?" the king then asked. Putting his hands together, Friar Sand said:

"I was originally a mortal man,

Who turned to the Way out of fear of the Wheel of Reincarnation.

1 wandered like a cloud to the corners of the seas.

Roamed to the very ends of the sky.

I always wore the robe and held the begging – bowl,

And ever concentrated my mind within the body.

Because of my sincerity

I fell in with immortals,

Raised the Baby Boy,

To mate him with the Lovely Girl.

When the Three Thousand Tasks were achieved

All was combined in the Four Images.

I rose above the boundary of the sky,

Bowed to the dark vault of heaven,

Chapter 94

1308

Journey to the West

And was appointed Curtain—lifting General.

1 was in attendance on the Phoenix and Dragon Carriage,

And General was my rank.

Because at the Peach Banquet

1 accidentally smashed a crystal bowl

1 was exiled to the Flowing Sands River,

My face was altered,

And I became an evil killer.

Fortunately the Bodhisattva traveled to the East

To persuade me to turn to the faith

And await the Buddha's son from Tang.

Who would go to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven.

I became his follower and made a fresh start,

Refining once more my great awareness.

I took my surname Sand from the river;

My Buddhist name is Wujing,

And my title Friar."

The king was both most alarmed and most delighted to hear this. Delighted because his daughter had found herself a living Buddha, and alarmed by three veritable evil gods. Just as the king was being torn between alarm and delight the chief astrologer submitted this memorial: "The wedding has been set for the twelfth day of this month, the day of water – rat, a lucky time at which all will be auspicious for nuptials."

"What day is it today?" the king asked.

"Today is the eighth, the day of earth – monkey," the astrologer replied, "the day on which gibbons offer fruit, and the right day on which to advance worthies and accept their suggestions." This greatly pleased the king, who sent his officials in attendance to have the halls and pavilions in the royal garden swept clear. Here he invited his future son – in – law with his three distinguished disciples to stay while they waited for the nuptial feast at which the princess would marry him. The underlings all carried out their instructions, the king ended the audience and the officials withdrew.

Chapter 94

1309

Journey to the West

The story now tells how when Sanzang and his disciples reached the imperial garden night was falling. A vegetarian meal was laid on. "We really deserve a meal today," said Pig with delight. The people in charge brought in plain rice and pasta by the carrying – pole load. Pig kept eating a bowlful then taking a refill over and over again. He only stopped eating when his stomach was completely full. A little later the lamps were lit and the bedding laid out, after which everyone went to bed. As soon as the venerable elder saw that there was nobody around he started to shout angrily at Monkey, berating him.

"You macaque, Wukong! You keep ruining me. I said we were just going to present the passport and told you not to go near the decorated tower. Why did you keep demanding to take me there to have a look? Well, did you have a good enough look? Whatever are we to do about this trouble you have got us into?"

"Master," replied Monkey, putting on a smile, "it was you who said, 'My late mother married after throwing an embroidered ball to make

the match she was destined for.' I only took you there because you seemed to want to enjoy something of the past. Besides, because I remembered what the ancient monk in the Almsgiver's Spread Gold Monastery said I came here to find out whether she's an impostor or not. When I saw the king just now there was something a bit sinister about the way he looked, but I haven't yet seen what the princess is like."

"What will happen when you see the princess?" the venerable elder asked.

"My fiery eyes with their golden pupils can tell whether someone's true or false, good or evil, rich or poor,"

Monkey replied. "I'll know what to do and be able to sort out right and wrong."

"So you've learned physiognomy in the last few days, elder brother," said Friar Sand and Pig with a smile.

"Physiognomists are just my grandson," Brother Monkey replied.

"Stop joking," shouted Sanzang. "He definitely wants me now. What are we to do about it?"

"At that happy occasion on the twelfth the princess is bound to come out to pay her respects to her parents,"

said Monkey. "I'll take a look at her from where I'll stand by the side. If she really is a woman you can be her consort and enjoy the kingdom's glory and splendor." This made Sanzang angrier than ever.

"You're a fine ape," he said abusively, "still trying to ruin me. As Wuneng said, we have already done ninety–seven or ninety–eight hundredths of the journey. You're trying to destroy me with your crafty tongue again. Shut up! Don't open that stinking mouth of yours any more. Next time there's any misbehavior from you I shall start reciting that spell again, and that will be more than you can take."

The mention of the spell being recited had Monkey falling straight to his knees before Sanzang and pleading,

"Don't say it, don't say it! If she's really a woman we'll all raise a rumpus in the palace during the wedding ceremony and get you out." While master and disciples were talking they had not noticed that it was now night. Indeed:

Slow dripped the clepsydras;

Heavy hung the fragrance of the flowers.

Pearl curtains hung over splendid doorways;

Chapter 94

1310

Journey to the West

No fire or light was seen in the still courtyard.

Empty was the shadow of the deserted swing;

All was silence when the flute's notes died away.

The room was surrounded by flowers and bright in the moonbeams,
Lit by those spiky stars not blocked by any trees.

The cuckoo rested from her song;

Long was the butterfly's dream.

The River Way spanned the celestial vault

While white clouds made their way home.

Just when they were closest in feeling

The willows swaying in the wind were more dispiriting than ever.

"It's late, Master," said Pig. "Let's carry on arguing tomorrow morning. Go to sleep now, go to sleep!" Master and disciples did then get a night's sleep.

The golden cockerel was soon greeting the dawn, and the king entered the throne hall for his audience. This is what could be seen:

A purple aura rising high above the opened palace

As the winds carried royal music to the azure sky.

While clouds drifted, the leopard – tail banners moved;

The sun shone upon the demon figures on the roof, and the jade pendants tinkled.

A scented mist delicately touched the palace's green willows,

While dewdrops lightly moistened the garden flowers.

A thousand officials in ranks shouted and danced in homage:

Seas and rivers were at peace and the state was unified.

Chapter 94

1311

Journey to the West

When all the civil and military officials had paid their homage to him, the king proclaimed, "The Department of Foreign Relations will arrange a nuptial banquet for the twelfth. Today the spring wine shall be prepared, and our future son—in—law shall be entertained in the royal gardens." The Protocol Office were told to lead the three worthy future royal in—laws to sit in the state hostel while the Department of Foreign Relations laid on a vegetarian banquet for the three of them. The two departments arranged for the musicians of the court orchestra to play and look after them while they passed the days enjoying the beauty of spring.

As soon as Pig heard this he said, "Your Majesty, we always stay with our master: we never leave him for a moment. As he's going to be drinking and feasting in the palace gardens we'd better go along for a couple of days' fun too if our master's to be your son—in—law. Otherwise the deal's off." Seeing how ugly and coarse—spoken Pig was, twisting his head and neck, thrusting his snout out and waving his ears——which all made him seem rather intimidating——the king was so worried that Pig might ruin the wedding that he had to accede to the request.

"Prepare a banquet for two in the Sino—Barbarian Hall of Eternal Pacification for our son—in—law and ourself.

Prepare a meal for the other three gentlemen in the Pavilion of Lingering Spring. We are afraid that it might be inconvenient for master and disciples to sit together." Only then did the idiot chant his respects to the king and thank him. Everyone then withdrew, after which the king ordered the officials of the inner palace to prepare a banquet, and told the queens and consorts of the three palaces and six compounds to give the princess hair ornaments, cakes and other things for the wedding on the twelfth.

It was now about ten in the morning, and the king had a carriage ready in which to take the Tang Priest and the others to go to see the palace gardens. The gardens were a fine place: The paths, inlaid with coloured stones,

Have carved and chiseled balustrades.

Beside the paths inlaid with coloured stones

Strange flowers spread over the rocks;

Outside the carved and chiseled balustrades,

And within them too, flower blossoms rare.

Early peach trees are a bewitching turquoise,

And golden orioles dart among the willows.

The walker finds the fragrance fill his sleeve,

And many pure scents imbue his clothing.

Phoenix terrace and dragon pool,

Bamboo lodge and pine pavilion.

On the phoenix terrace

Chapter 94

1312

Journey to the West

Pipes are played to lure the phoenix to appear;

In the dragon pools

Fish are reared to become dragons and leave.

In the bamboo lodge are poems

Whose well—chosen words match the "White Snow Melody"

The books in the pine pavilion

Are pearls and jade in blue—covered volumes.

Rocks and jade twist around the artificial hills;

Deep are the blue – green waters of the winding stream.

Peony pavilions,

Rose bowers,

Make a natural brocade.

Trellises of jasmine,

Beds of begonia,

Are like sunset clouds or jeweled mosaics.

Herbaceous peonies are marvelously fragrant;

Rare is the beauty of the mallows from Sichuan.

White pear and red apricot blossom vie in scent;

Purple orchid and golden daylily compete in splendor.

Corn poppy,

Lily magnolia buds,

Azalea flowers,

Are brilliantly coloured.

Magnolia flowers,

Garden balsam,

Plantain lilies,

Chapter 94

1313

Journey to the West

Tremble.

Everywhere red shines through the richness of cosmetics

While heavy scents drift from a brocade surrounding screen.

The warmth returning with the East wind is greeted with joy;

All the garden's beauties display their brilliance.

The king and his companions walked around enjoying the flowers for a long time. Soon the officials of the Protocol Office came to invite Monkey and the other two to the Pavilion of Lingering Spring while the king led the Tang Priest by the hand to the Sino–Barbarian Hall so that they could all drink and feast. These were splendid occasions with singing, dancing and instrumental music. Indeed: The sun shone from the majestic palace gates;

Good auras filled the royal buildings.

The spring spread out an embroidery of flowers,

And heaven's light shone from afar on the court robes.

Pipes and singers wafted their music as if in a banquet of immortals;
The goblets flew, carrying jade liquor.

Master and subjects enjoyed the same pleasure

As Sino–barbarian peace brought prosperity.

Seeing with what great respect he was being treated by the king, the venerable elder had nothing for it but to force himself to join in the celebrations. In fact he gave only a show of happiness: inside he was miserable. As he sat there he saw four golden screens hanging on the wall, screens painted with scenes of the four seasons.

Each picture had a poem on it by a famous academician. The poem on the spring scene read: The vital forces of heaven turn creation around;

The world is happy and everything is renewed.

The peach and the plum blossoms vie in splendor;

Swallows fly to the painted rafters, shaking the incense dust.

Chapter 94

The poem on the summer scene read:

In warm and sultry air all thoughts are slow

The palace mallow and pomegranate reflect the sun's brilliance.

The jade flute's music disturbs the noonday dream;

The scent of caltrops is wafted through the curtains.

The poem on the autumn scene read:

One leaf on the parasol tree by the well is yellow;

The pearl curtain is not rolled up on the night of frost.

After the autumn sacrifice the swallows abandon their nest;

When the rush flowers snap, the wild geese leave for another land.

The poem on the winter scene read:

The clouds fly over the rainy sky, all dark and cold;

The North wind blows the snow into thousands of bills.

Deep in the palace the stove glows warm;

They say the plum has blossomed by the jade balustrade.

When the king noticed the absorption with which the Tang Priest was gazing at the poems he said, "As you enjoy savoring the poems so much you must be a fine poet yourself, son—in—law. If you do not begrudge your pearls we would like to invite you to make up a matching poem for each of them, ending three of the lines with the same word. Will you agree?"

The venerable elder was the sort of person who could be so carried away by a scene that he forgot the circumstances, someone who had an enlightened mind and thoroughly comprehended his own nature, so when Chapter 94

the king pressed him so earnestly to match the verses he found himself saying the line, "The sun's warmth melts the ice the world around."

This greatly pleased the king, who told the officials in attendance on him, "Fetch the four treasures of the study, so that our son－in－law can write down the matching verses he composes for us to savor at our leisure."

The venerable elder was glad to comply. Picking up a brush, he produced matching lines. The matching poem on the spring scene read:

The sun's warmth melts the ice the world around;

Within the palace garden, flowers are renewed.

Gentle winds and rain enrich the people;

Rivers and seas are calm; gone is all worldly dust.

The matching poem on the summer scene read:

The Dipper now points South; the day goes slow;

Locust and pomegranate trees contend in brilliance.

Golden oriole and purple swallow sing in the willows,

Their melodious voices drifting through red curtains.

The matching poem on the autumn read:

Fragrant the green mandarin; the orange turns to yellow.

Blue pine and cypress welcome frost's coming.

Half－open chrysanthemums make a tapestry on the trellis;

Pipes and songs waft through the watery, cloud－covered land.

The matching poem on the winter scene read:

As skies clear after welcome snow the air is cold;

Grotesque – shaped crags and boulders mark jade hills.

As charcoal burns in the stove to warm the yogurt

Singing with hands in their sleeves they lean on jade balustrades.

The king was utterly delighted by the matching verses. "'Singing with hands in their sleeves they lean on jade balustrades' is really good," he said with admiration, and ordered the royal orchestra to set the new poems to music. The banquet did not break up until the day was over.

Brother Monkey and the other two were also having a splendid meal in the Pavilion of Lingering Spring. Each of them was feeling rather merry after downing a few cups, and they decided to go to see their master, who was in another building with the king. This made Pig start acting like the idiot he was.

"This is great," he yelled at once. "We're doing very nicely here. Today we've had a right good time. But now we're full we ought to go to sleep it off."

"You really are ill – bred, brother," said Friar Sand with a grin. "How could you possibly go to sleep when you're as full as that?"

"You wouldn't know," said Pig. "There's a saying that goes, Unless you stretch out for a nap when you've dined

How can your belly with fat be well lined?"

When the Tang Priest had taken his leave of the king he went back to the pavilion and scolded pig: "Cretin!

You acted coarser than ever. What sort of place do you think this is, to shout and yell like that? If you had made the king angry he would have had you killed."

"Don't worry," Pig replied, "don't worry. We're being treated as his in – laws, so it would be very awkward for him to get angry with us. As the proverb goes,

If you're related a beating can't rend it;

If you are neighbors a cursing won't end it.

We were only joking. He's nothing to be frightened of."

At this the venerable elder shouted, "Bring the idiot here. Give him twenty strokes of the dhyana staff."

Monkey then grabbed Pig and knocked him over, while Sanzang raised the cudgel to beat him.

"Master, Royal Son－in－law," the idiot shouted, "Spare me! Spare me!"

One of the officials who was present at the banquet persuaded Sanzang not to hit Pig, who clambered back on his feet, grumbling, "You're a fine excellency; you're a fine royal son－in－law. Applying the royal law before you're even married!"

"Stop that nonsense," said Monkey, making a face at him, "stop that nonsense! Go to bed at once." They then spent another night in the Lingering Spring Pavilion. The next morning they feasted as before.

Before long they had been enjoying themselves for three or four days, by when it was that splendid day, the twelfth. The officials of the three sections of the Department of Foreign Relations all submitted a memorial that said, "Since we received the edicts on the eighth the palace for the Royal Son－in－law has been built, and all that we are waiting for is for the trousseau to be installed. The nuptial banquet has been prepared, with meat and vegetarian food for over five hundred guests."

This greatly pleased the king, who was just going to invite his future son－in－law to come to the banquet when a eunuch from the inner quarters of the palace reported to him, "Your Majesty, Her Majesty the Queen asks you to come." The king then withdrew to the inner quarters of the palace, where the queens of the three palaces and the consorts of the six compounds brought the princess to the Sunlight Palace to talk and joke together. The place was truly a mass of flowers or brocade. The magnificence and beauty was more than a match for the halls of heaven or the moon's pavilions; nor was it inferior to the jade palaces of immortals.

There are four new lyrics on the "Happy Gathering and Splendid Wedding" about it. The lyric "Happy" goes: Happy! Happy!

Delight and bliss!

The wedding is celebrated

With its love and beauty.

Elegant court dresses

That the Lady of the Moon could never rival;

Dragon and phoenix hairpins,

Sumptuous threads of flying gold.

Cherry lips, white teeth and rouge—red cheeks

Sylphs with forms as delicate as flowers.

Brocades upon brocades,

Chapter 94

1318

Journey to the West

An extravagance of color,

Full of fragrance,

A host of princesses.

The lyric "Gathering" goes:

Gathering! Gathering!

Bewitching charms,

Rivaling the great beauties of the past,

Enough to topple a city or a state,

Like flowers or jade.

Dressed to make them lovelier still,

Even more dazzling in their finery,

And the splendor of their jewels.

Their orchid hearts and natures were pure and lofty;

Noble were their powder – white faces and ice – smooth skin.

The lines of their painted eyebrows were like distant hills;

They formed a throng of willowy elegance.

The lyric "Splendid" goes:

Splendid! Splendid!

Jade girls, fairy maidens,

Utterly adorable,

Truly to be admired,

Perfumed with fine fragrances,

Chapter 94

1319

Journey to the West

Adorned with cosmetics.

Although far from the Tiantai paradise,

This was no mere palace of a king.

Sweet were their smiling words

As the sound of pipes and songs was wafted around.

A thousand beauties, massed flowers, a splendid brocade:

How could its match be found in the world?

The lyric "Wedding" goes:

Wedding! Wedding!

Orchid Fragrance,

Ranks of fairy girls,

Crowds of beauties.

The royal concubines have put on new splendor;

The princesses are in fresh garments.

Piled clouds of raven hair,

Rainbow gowns over phoenix skirts.

Soft music of immortals,

Two rows of purple and red.

In the past they pledged to ride in one phoenix chariot;

This morning is the happy occasion and the splendid wedding.

When the king arrived his queens and consorts led the princess and the other palace ladies out to meet him.

The delighted king took them into the Sunlight Palace to sit down. When the queens, consorts and others had made their obeisances the king said, "Princess, my good daughter, we think that your heart's desire was fulfilled when you had the good fortune to find the holy monk by throwing your ball from the decorated tower on the eighth. The officials of all the departments have been most understanding of our wishes, so that Chapter 94

everything is now ready. As today is a lucky one let us hurry to the nuptial banquet and not be late."

The princess stepped forward, went down in a kowtow, and submitted this petition: "Your Majesty my father, I beg you to forgive your daughter for her effrontery, but I have a request to make. In the last few days it has been reported in the inner quarters of the palace that the Tang Priest has three extremely hideous disciples. I couldn't bring myself to see them: I'm afraid the sight would terrify me. So I beg you, Father, to send them out of the city. Otherwise the shock might be too much for my trail health and lead to disaster."

"If you had not mentioned them, child," the king replied, "we would have very nearly forgotten about them.

They are indeed rather ugly, and for the last few days we have had them entertained in the Lingering Spring Pavilion. When we go into the throne hall this morning we will return their passport and tell them to leave the city so that we can hold our banquet." The princess then kowtowed again in thanks, after which the king left in his carriage to enter the throne hall and issue a decree inviting his son −in−law and the other three gentlemen to attend.

Now the Tang Priest had been following the dates by counting on his fingers, so when he reached the twelfth he had a discussion with his three disciples before dawn. "It is the twelfth today," he said. "How are we to cope?"

"I've already noticed something of an ill−omened air about the king," Brother Monkey replied, "but the evil hasn't actually infected him or done any great harm. The only thing is that I've not yet had a look at the princess. If she comes out and lets me take a peep at her I'll know whether she's an impostor or not, then I'll do something. Don't worry. He's bound to summon us now and send us three away from the city. Accept the invitation and don't be afraid. I'll slip back and stay close to you to protect you." As master and disciples were talking a royal equerry did indeed come with officials from the protocol office to bring an invitation.

"Let's go," said Monkey, "let's go. I'm sure they're going to see us three on our way and keep you here, Master, for the wedding."

"If they're seeing us off they're bound to give us hundreds and thousands of ounces of gold and silver," said Pig. "We'll be able to buy some presents to take home with us. When I get back to my in−laws' place I'll be able to have a bit of fun again."

"Shut up, second brother," said Friar Sand, "and stop talking such nonsense. We'll do what big brother says."

They then followed the officials to the foot of the throne hall steps, taking baggage and horse with them.

When the king had greeted them he commanded Monkey and the other two to come forward. "Hand your passport up," he said, "and we shall seal it, sign it and return it to you. You three gentlemen will be generously provided with funds for your journey and escorted on your way to see the Buddha on Vulture Peak. If you come back with the

scriptures you will also receive generous rewards. We shall keep our son—in—law here: there will be no need for you to worry about him."

Monkey thanked the king, then told Friar Sand to take the passport out and hand it over. The king read it, sealed and signed it, then brought out ten ingots of gold and twenty of silver that he wanted to present to them as gifts for his in—laws. Pig, who always had been very keen on money and sex, stepped forward to accept them.

Monkey then gave a respectful chant and said, "We've disturbed you."

As Monkey turned to go Sanzang hastily scrambled to his feet, grabbed hold of him, and said through clenched teeth, "You are all abandoning me."

Chapter 94

1321

Journey to the West

Brother Monkey pinched the palm of Sanzang's hand, gave him a meaningful look and said, "Unwind and take your pleasure here while we go to fetch the scriptures. We'll call on you on our way back." Not knowing whether to believe this or not, the venerable elder refused to let him go. When all the officials saw this they took it for a real parting. Soon the king invited his son—in—law back into the throne hall, ordering the officials to escort the three gentlemen out of the city, whereupon Sanzang had to let go of Monkey and enter the hall.

As Brother Monkey and the other two went out through the palace gates they each took their leave.

"Are we really going?" asked Pig. Monkey said nothing, and just walked back to the hostel, where the superintendent received them and provided tea and a meal.

"You two stay here," Monkey said to Pig and Friar Sand, "and whatever you do, don't show your faces. If the hostel superintendent asks what's happening, give him vague answers. Don't say anything. I'm going off to look after the master."

The splendid Great Sage pulled out one of his hairs, blew on it with magic breath, called "Change!" and turned it into his own double to stay in the hostel with Pig and Friar Sand, while he himself leapt up into mid air in a flash, turning himself into a bee.

Yellow wings, sweet mouth and a sharp tail,

He dances wildly in the wind,

The brilliant thief of fragrance from the blossom

Who sways his way through willows and flowers.

With many a drenching for his troubles

He flies to and fro, but all in vain.

The thick delight be makes he never tastes;

All he can do is leave his fame behind.

Watch him as he flies lightly into the palace, where he saw the Tang Priest sitting on an embroidered stool at the king's left, frowning and worried at heart. Flying up to his master's Vairocana mitre, Monkey crept stealthily to his ear and said, "I'm here, Master, so don't fret." These words were heard by the Tang Priest alone, — —none of the ordinary mortals had any hope of hearing them — —so he felt relief at last.

Before long a eunuch came with an invitation: "Your Majesty, the nuptial banquet is set out in the Jay Palace.

Her Majesty and the princess are awaiting you in the inner quarters. They invite Your Majesty and His Excellency to go in for the wedding." Overwhelmed with happiness, the king went into the inner quarters with his son—in—law. Indeed:

Chapter 94

1322

Journey to the West

The wicked king's love of flowers led to disaster;

When the dhyana mind starts thinking, each thought brings sorrow.

If you don't know how the Tang Priest escaped once in the inner quarters of the palace, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 95

False and True Form Combine When the Jade Hare is Captured

The True Female Is Converted and Meets With Spiritual Origin

The story tells how the Tang Priest was feeling thoroughly miserable as he accompanied the king into the inner quarters, from where a great sound of drums and music arose and fine perfumes could be smelt. He kept his head bowed, not daring to look up. Monkey, secretly very pleased, had fixed himself to the Vairocana mitre, from where he used his magic light to look around with his fiery eyes and golden pupils. There were two ranks of court ladies, making it seem like a palace of flowers or immortals, and finer than a spring breeze blowing past a brocade screen. Indeed, they were

Graceful and charming,

Jadelike, and with ice – smooth skin.

Bewitching pairs more lovely than the girl of Chu,

Beauties two by two, rivaling the lady Xi Shi.

Their hair was coiled high like flying phoenixes;

Their eyebrows were just visible, low lines of distant hills.

Elegantly played the pipe and shawm;

Fast sounded flute and drum.

All the notes of the scale rang out,

Rising then falling again together.

Delightful were they as they danced and sang,

A carpet of flowers, every one of them lovely.

Chapter 95

1323

Journey to the West

Seeing that his master was not in the least moved by this Monkey silently smacked his lips in admiration and said, "What a fine monk! What a fine monk!

Dwelling amid splendor, his heart forms no attachment;

Walking through magnificence, his mind is not confused."

A little later the princess came out of the Jay Palace surrounded by the queens and consorts so greet the king with cheers of "Long live the king! Long live the king!" This so alarmed the venerable elder that he trembled, not knowing what to do.

By now Monkey had already noticed a touch of the demonic—
—though nothing very vicious— —that could just be made out in the aura above the princess's head. Monkey crawled quickly to Sanzang's ear and said, "The princess is a fake, Master."

"If she is a fake," the venerable elder replied, "then how are we to make her turn back into her real form?"

"I'll give myself a magic body and catch her right here," said Monkey.

"That would terrify His Majesty," said Sanzang. "Wait till he and his queens have withdrawn before using your magic."

Now Monkey had been impatient by nature all his life, so he could not restrain himself. With a great and angry roar he resumed his true from, rushed up and grabbed the princess. "You're a fine, evil beast," he said abusively. "You've had no end of luxury here, you impostor, but it wasn't enough for you. You're so sex—crazed you had to try to trick my master and destroy his primal masculinity." This struck the king speechless with fright, and made the queens and consorts fall about. The palace beauties all ran off to hide, fleeing for their lives. It was just like

A roaring wind in spring,

The howling autumn gale.

When the roaring wind in spring blows through the wood

A thousand blossoms are shaken;

When the howling autumn gale hits the park

Ten thousand leaves all swirl and fly.

The tree peony beneath the balustrade is snapped;

Herbaceous peonies beside the balcony fall over.

Chapter 95

1324

Journey to the West

Hibiscus on the pond's banks are shaken all about.

While chrysanthemums are flung in heaps at the foot of the terrace.

The delicate begonia collapses in the dust;

The fragrant rose is now sleeping in the wilds.

The spring wind smashes caltrop, lotus and pear;

Winter snows weigh down the plum tree's tender blossoms.

The petals of the pomegranate

Are scattered all around the inner courtyard;

The branches of the willow

Are blown sideways within the royal palace.

Fine blooms, and a night of raging wind and rain:

Countless red petals carpet the ground with brocade.

Sanzang hastily put his trembling arms round the king and said, "Don't be afraid, Your Majesty. It is only my wicked disciple using his magical powers to find out whether she is an impostor or not."

Seeing that things were going badly for her, the evil spirit broke free, tore off her clothes, flung down her jewelry and hair ornaments and ran to the shrine of the local deity in the palace garden. From here she brought out a short club shaped like the head of a trip－hammer, with which she started hitting wildly at Monkey as she turned quickly towards him. Monkey, who had caught up with her at once, struck back at her face with his iron cudgel, Shouting and roaring at each other, the two of them started fighting in the palace gardens. Then each began a great display of magic powers, riding clouds as they battled in mid air. In this fight Great was the fame of the gold －banded cudgel;

No one had heard of the hammerhead club.

One of them was there to fetch the true scriptures;

The other was lingering for love of rare flowers.

Long had the demon known of the holy Tang Priest,

And she longed to mate with his primal seed—juices.

Chapter 95

1325

Journey to the West

In a past year she had carried off the real princess,

And taken the form of the king's true daughter.

When she met the Great Sage, who saw her evil aura,

He could tell true from false as he came to save a life.

The murderous club was flung at the head;

The mighty iron cudgel struck back at the face.

Ranting and roaring, they were locked in struggle,

Filling the skies and blotting out the sun.

As the two of them battled in mid air they terrified the common people of the city, and struck fear into all the officials at court. The venerable elder kept saying as he supported the king, "Don't be alarmed, and please tell Her Majesty and all the others not to be afraid. Your princess is an impostor pretending to be her. When my disciple has captured her you will be able to see whether she is good or evil." Some of the bolder consorts brought clothes and jewelry to show the queen.

"These are what the princess wore. She tore them off and is fighting that monk up in the sky stark naked. She must be an evil spirit." Only then did the king, queens and consorts come to their senses and look up into the sky.

When the evil spirit and the Great Sage had been fighting for half a day without either emerging as victor Monkey threw his cudgel up and called "Change!" One turned into ten, ten into a hundred, and a

hundred into a thousand. Half the sky was filled with writhing serpents and pythons striking wildly at the evil spirit. With a flurry of her hands and feet she turned into a pure wind and fled into the azure sky. Monkey said a spell, took all the iron cudgels back into a single cudgel, and went straight after her magic light.

As he approached the Western Gate of Heaven and saw the dazzling flags and banners Monkey shouted at the top of his voice, "Heavenly gatekeepers, stop that evil spirit and don't let her get away." The gate was being held by the Heavenly King Lokapala with the four great marshals Pang, Liu, Gou and Bi, who did indeed use their weapons to block the way. As she could not get further she turned straight back and started fighting Monkey with her short club.

As he wheeled his iron cudgel the Great Sage looked carefully at her and saw that one end of her club was thick and one end thin, just like the lead of a trip－hammer used for hulling with a mortar, so he gave a furious roar and shouted, "Beast! What's that implement you're holding? How dare you fight me with it? Surrender at once or I'll smash your skull with a single blow from my cudgel."

Grinding her teeth, the evil spirit replied, "You don't know about this weapon of mine, so listen while I tell you:

Its immortal root was a piece of mutton－fat jade,

Which took countless years to be worked into shape.

It was already mine when chaos was separated;

When the primal disorder was sorted out I came first.

Its origins cannot be compared with mere mortal things;

Its nature has always belonged to the highest heaven.

Embodying the golden light and the four images

With the auspicious vapors of the Five Elements and the Three Primaries.

Long did it live with me in the Moon Palace,

Staying beside me in the Cassia Hall.

For love of flowers I descended to the mortal world,

Coming to India as a beautiful impostor.

The only reason why I shared the King's pleasures

Was because I wanted my destined marriage with the Tang Priest.

How could you be so cruel as to ruin this fine mating,

Pursuing me and giving rein to your vicious nature?

Great is the fame of this implement of mine,

Which is older than your cudgel with gold bands.

It was a drug – pounding pestle in the Moon Palace:

One blow from this and a life is ended."

When Monkey heard this he replied with a mocking laugh, "Evil beast! If you used to live in the Toad Palace you must have heard of my powers. How dare you argue with me! Turn back into your real self and surrender at once if I'm to spare your life."

"I know you," the monster replied. "You're the Protector of the Horses who made great havoc in the palaces of Heaven five hundred years ago. By rights I ought to give way to you, but because you've wrecked my marriage I hate you as much as if you'd killed my mother and father. It's more than I can stand for. I'm going to kill you, you Protector of the Horses, for breaking the laws of Heaven." The words Protector of the Horses always infuriated the Great Sage, so the moment he heard them he flew into a great rage, lifted his iron cudgel and struck at her face. The evil spirit swung her pestle in reply. A ferocious battle then ensued in front of the Western Gate of Heaven. In this combat there were

A gold – banded cudgel,

A drug – pounding pestle,

Two immortals' weapons, a worthy match.

One had come down to earth for the sake of a marriage;

The other was there to protect the Tang Priest.

It was because the king was not a righteous one

And loved flowers that he attracted the evil spirit,

Causing today's bitter strife

As two of them gave Ml play to their stubbornness of heart.

Charging and rushing each other they strove for triumph;

In cutting words they fought on with their tongues.

Rare was the martial prowess of the medicine pestle,

But finer still was the iron cudgel's might.

A powerful golden light flashed at the heavenly gates;

Brilliantly coloured mists went right down to the earth.

After a dozen rounds of fighting to and fro

The evil spirit became too weak to resist.

When the evil spirit had fought another dozen or so rounds with Brother Monkey she could see how thick and fast his blows were coming, and realized that she could not win. Feinting with her pestle, she shook herself and fled due South in ten thousand beams of golden light with the Great Sage in pursuit. Suddenly they reached a great mountain, where the evil spirit landed her golden light and disappeared into a cave. Monkey, who was worried that she might escape, return to India and do some underhand harm to the Tang Priest, made sure he could recognize the mountain then turned his cloud round and went straight back to the capital.

It was now about four in the afternoon. The king was clinging to Sanzang, shivering and shaking as he kept saying, "Save me, holy

monk!"

The consorts and queens were all in a panic as the Great Sage came down from the clouds with a cry of, "Here I am, Master!"

Chapter 95

1328

Journey to the West

"Stand still, Wukong," said Sanzang. "You must not alarm His Majesty. Now, I am asking you what in fact happened about the imitation princess." Standing outside the Jay Palace, Monkey put his hands together in front of his chest and said, "The imitation princess was an evil spirit. First of all I fought her for half a day, and she couldn't beat me, so she turned into a pure wind and fled straight to the gates of heaven. I shouted to the gods to block her way. She turned back into her real self and fought another dozen or so rounds with me.

Then she turned herself into golden light and fled due South to a mountain, beaten. I chased her as fast as I could till I got to the mountain, but I couldn't find her anywhere. Then I came back because I was worried she might come here to harm you."

When the king heard this he grabbed hold of the Tang Priest and asked, "If the false princess was an evil spirit, where is my real princess?"

"When I've caught the false princess your real princess will turn up by herself," Monkey replied straight away.

When the queens and consorts heard this their fears vanished, and each of them came forward to bow and say,

"We beg you to rescue our real princess, holy monk, and sort out the light from the dark. You will be richly rewarded."

"This is no place for us to talk," said Monkey. "I beg Your Majesty to go from the inner quarters to the throne hall with my master. Her Majesty and the rest of them should all go back to the inner palace, and my fellow–disciples Pig and Friar Sand should be sent for to protect my master so that I can go and subdue the demon. That will keep a proper distinction between the inner and outer quarters of the palace, and spare me from worrying. I am going to sort this out to show my sincerity."

The king accepted the suggestion and was boundlessly grateful. He led the Tang Priest out of the inner quarters and straight to the throne hall. All the queens and consorts returned to the inner palace. A vegetarian meal was ordered while Pig and Friar Sand were sent for. The two of them soon arrived. Monkey explained to them both about what had happened and told them to guard the master carefully. The Great Sage set off by his cloud somersault and flew up into mid air. All the officials in front of the throne hall looked up into the sky and bowed low.

The Great Sage Monkey went straight to the mountain that lay due South. When the evil spirit had fled in defeat to the mountain and gone into her den she blocked the entrance with boulders and lay hidden there, terrified. Having looked around for a while and seen no sign of life Monkey felt very impatient, so he made a spell with his hands and said the magic words, calling out the local deity and mountain god to be questioned.

A moment later the two gods arrived, kowtowed and said, "We didn't realize, we didn't realize. If we had known we'd have gone a long way to meet you. We beg you to forgive us."

"I won't hit you just now," Monkey said. "Tell me what this mountain's called. How many evil spirits are there here? Tell me the truth and I'll forgive you your crimes."

"Great Sage," the two gods replied, "this mountain is called Mount Hairtrip. There are three have warrens in the mountain, but from remote antiquity there have never been any evil spirits here. This is a blessed land of five felicities. Great Sage, if you want to find an evil spirit, take the road to the Western Heaven."

"I've reached the kingdom of India in the Western Heaven, where the king has a princess who was carried off by an evil spirit and abandoned in the wilds. The evil spirit turned herself into the princess's double to deceive the king into building a decorated tower from which she could throw an embroidered ball to find herself a husband. When I got to the foot of the tower while escorting the Tang Priest she deliberately hit the Tang Priest because she wanted to mate with him and lure his primal masculinity out of him. When I saw through her I turned back into myself in the palace to catch her. She threw off her human clothes and jewels and fought with me for half a day with a short club that she called a medicine—pounding pestle. Then she turned

herself into a pure wind and disappeared. When I chased her as far as the Western Gate of Heaven and fought another dozen or more with her she realized she couldn't beat me, turned herself into golden right and fled here. Why didn't you see her!"

When the two gods heard this they led Brother Monkey to search the three warrens. When they first looked by the warren at the foot of the mountain a few frightened hares were startled and ran away. When their search reached the cave at the top of the mountain they saw that the entrance was blocked with two great boulders.

"The evil spirit must have gone inside," the local god said, "when you were chasing her so hard."

Monkey then pried the boulders apart with his iron cudgel. The evil spirit, who was indeed hiding in there, sprang out with a whoosh, raising her medicine pestle to strike him with. As Monkey swung his cudgel to parry her blow the mountain deity fell back in terror and the local god fled.

From the demon's mouth came abusive grumbles: "Who told you to bring him here to find me?" She continued to fend off the iron cudgel as she fled up into mid air in a fighting retreat.

Just at the moment of crisis, when it was getting late in the day, Monkey became more vicious than ever and his blows were even harder. He wished he could finish her off with a single stroke. Just then a call came from the ninefold azure sky of, "Don't strike, Great Sage! Don't strike! Be kind with your cudgel."

When Monkey turned round he saw that it was the Star Lord of the Moon leading his beauties and immortals down on multicolored clouds to stand in front of him. A flustered Monkey at once put his iron cudgel away, bowed and said, "Where are you going, Old Man? I'm sorry I didn't keep out of your way."

"The evil spirit fighting you is the Jade Hare who pounds the immortal elixir of mysterious dew in my palace," the Moon replied. "A year ago she secretly opened the golden locks on the jade gates and absconded from the palace. As I reckoned that she would be in mortal peril I have come here to save her life. I do beg you, Great Sage, to spare her life out of consideration for me."

Monkey assented, saying only, "I wouldn't dare harm her, I wouldn't dare. No wonder she's so good with a medicine – pounding pestle. She's the Jade Hare. What you don't know, Old Moon, is that she has kidnapped the king of India's daughter, made herself into the princess's double, and wants to ruin my master's primal masculinity although he's a holy monk. This is the truth. We can't stand for crimes like that. How can you possibly let her off so lightly?"

"There are things you don't know," the Moon replied. "That king's daughter is no ordinary mortal. She was the White Beauty from the Moon Palace. Eighteen years ago she slapped the Jade Hare, after which she longed for the human world and came down to it in a beam of magic light to the womb of the king's senior queen.

She was born then. The Jade Hare was getting her own back for that slap when she ran away from the palace last year and threw White Beauty into the wilds. But she was wrong to want to marry the Tang Priest. That's an offence she mustn't get away with. It was a good thing you were careful enough to see through her before she ruined your master. But I plead with you to forgive her for my sake and let me take her back."

"If that's why it happened," Brother Monkey replied with a smile, "I wouldn't dare to make any objections.

But if you take the Jade Hare back I'm worried that the king might not believe it, so I'd like to trouble you and the immortal sisters to take the Jade Hare over there to prove it to the king. Then I'll be able to show off my powers and explain how White Beauty came down to earth. I'll make the king fetch Princess White Beauty to prove the truth of retribution.

Chapter 95

1330

Journey to the West

The Moon was persuaded, so he pointed at the evil spirit and shouted, "Repent and submit, evil beast!" The Jade Hare rolled on the ground and turned back into her real form. Indeed she was Gap – lipped and sharp – toothed,

Long – eared and with few whiskers.

Her body was covered with jade – coloured fur;

When she stretched out her legs she flew over mountains.

Her straight nose was like yogurt,

Glossier than face—cream with powder.

Two eyes glowed red,

Brighter than dots of rouge on the snow.

Crouching on the ground

She was a heap of pure white silk;

When she stretched herself out

She was a structure of dazzling silver wire.

Often did she

Drink in the purest dew of the heavenly dawn,

Pounding the elixir with her pestle of jade.

When the Great Sage saw this he was delighted, and treading clouds and light he led the way as the Moon Lord brought all the beauties and immortals, taking the Jade Hare with them as they headed straight for India.

It was now dusk, and the moon was slowly rising. When they reached the walls of the capital they heard the drums being beaten on the watch—towers. The king and the Tang Priest were still inside the throne hall, while Pig, Friar Sand and the officials were standing in front of the steps. They were just discussing whether the king should withdraw when a sheet of coloured cloud as bright as day was seen due South.

When they all raised their heads to look they heard the Great Sage Monkey shouting at the top of his voice,

"Your Majesty, King of India, ask your queens and consorts to come out and look. Under this canopy is the Star Lord of the Moon Palace, and the immortal sisters to either side of him are the beauties of the moon. This Jade Hare was the bogus princess of yours who has now turned back into her real form." The king then quickly called his queen, consorts, palace beauties and maids out, and they all kowtowed towards the sky. The king, the Tang Priest and the officials

also bowed to the sky in thanks. There was nobody in any house throughout the whole city who did not set out an altar on which to burn incense, kowtow and recite the name Chapter 95

of the Buddha.

Just when everyone was looking up Pig felt a surge of uncontrollable desire, leapt up into the air and flung his arms round an immortal girl dressed in a rainbow. "We're old Mends, darling," he said. "Let's go and have a bit of fun." Monkey went up to Pig, grabbed hold of him, gave him a couple of slaps and swore at him: "You village idiot. What sort of place is this for getting randy?"

"I was just going to chat her up for a bit of fun," said Pig.

The Moon Lord had his celestial canopy turned about as he took the Jade Hare straight back to the Moon Palace with all his beauties. Brother Monkey threw Pig down into the dust, then was thanked by the king in the throne hall.

When the king was told what had happened he said, "We are very grateful to you, holy monk, for using your great magical powers to capture the imitation princess. But where is our real daughter?"

"She is no ordinary human either," Monkey replied, "but the immortal girl White Beauty from the Moon Palace. Because she slapped the Jade Hare in the face eighteen years ago she yearned for the lower world, came down to the womb of Your Majesty's senior queen and was born here. It was because the Jade Hare nursed her old grudge that she surreptitiously opened the golden lock on the jade gate's, came down here, abandoned White Beauty in the wilds and made herself look like White Beauty to deceive you. The Moon Lord himself told me about this chain of events. Today we've got rid of the imposter, and tomorrow I'll invite Your Majesty to go in your royal carriage to fetch the real one."

This came as rather a shock to the king, who said with the tears streaming down his cheeks, "Daughter! In all the time since we came to the throne as a child we have never even gone outside the city gates. Where are we to go to look for you?"

"No need to upset yourself," said Monkey with a smile. "Your daughter

is now in the Almsgiver's Spread Gold Monastery, pretending to be mad. Everyone can go home now. Tomorrow morning I'll bring your real princess back to you."

"Please stop worrying, Your Majesty," the officials all said, kowtowing. "These holy monks are all Buddhas who can ride clouds and mists: they are sure to know all about causes and effects in the future and the past. If we trouble the holy monks to come with us tomorrow to look for her we will learn the truth."

Accepting their suggestion, the king invited the monks to the Lingering Spring Pavilion, where a vegetarian meal was provided and they were to spend the night. By now it was almost the second watch. Indeed: The copper water–clock drips in the moon's bright glow;

The chimes of the golden bell are carried by the wind.

When the cuckoo sings the spring is half–way gone;

The blossoms fall aimlessly as the third watch draws near.

The swing casts a shadow in deserted royal gardens;

Chapter 95

1332

Journey to the West

The silver river spans the sky's blue vault.

No travelers are to be seen in markets and streets;

The constellations make the night sky shine.

That night they all went to bed, and of that no more need be said.

During the night the king lost his demonic aura, and his spirit grew with great speed, so that at three marks after the fifth watch he came out of the inner quarters to give audience once more. When the audience was over he ordered that the Tang Priest and his three disciples be fetched to discuss the search for the princess.

Sanzang then came and did obeisance to the king, while the Great Sage and the other two also paid their respects. The king bowed to them and said, "Yesterday you spoke of our daughter the princess. May we trouble you divine monks to find and rescue her?"

"The day before yesterday we had been walking from the East till evening," the venerable elder replied,

"when we saw the Almsgiver's Spread Gold Monastery. We went inside to ask for accommodation and had the good fortune to be entertained by the monks there. After supper I took a moonlight stroll in the former Spread Gold Garden, and as I was looking at the remains I heard wailing. When I asked what it was all about, an ancient monk, over a hundred years old, sent everyone else away before telling me, 'Now, about that wailing, in the late spring of last year I was enjoying the moon when suddenly heard a gust of wind and the sound of someone grieving. I got out of bed, went into the Jetavana and saw a girl there. When I questioned her the girl said, "I am a princess, the daughter of the king of India. The wind blew me here when I was looking at the flowers by moonlight."' The ancient monk knows a lot about correct behavior, so he locked the princess up in a quiet, out—of—the—way cell. As he was worried that the monks of the monastery might sully her he put it about that he had locked up an evil spirit. The princess, who understood what he was doing, ranted and raved during the day and demanded food and tea. Only late at night, when there was nobody about, did she think of her mother and father and cry for them. The ancient monk did come to the capital to make enquiries several times, but when he found that the princess was well and in the palace he didn't dare say anything or submit a memorial. When the ancient monk saw that my disciple had some magic powers he repeatedly insisted that we were to come here to investigate. I never expected that she would turn out to be the Jade Hare from the Moon Palace who had put on an imitation of the real body and made herself look like the princess. She was also set on ruining my primal masculinity. Fortunately my disciple showed his mighty magic and detected the fraud. The Jade Hare has now been recaptured by the Moon Lord. Your worthy princess is now pretending to be crazy in the Spread Gold Monastery."

After hearing the story in all this detail the king started to weep aloud. This soon alarmed the queens and consorts of the three palaces and six compounds, who all came out to ask why. Everybody began to weep bitterly, and it was a long time before the king asked, "How far is the Spread Gold Monastery from the city?"

"Only twenty miles," Sanzang replied.

The king then issued these commands: "Let the Queens of the Eastern and Western Palaces look after the court while the High Minister takes charge of the nation's business. We are going to the monastery with

our Senior Queen, our officials and the four holy monks to fetch the princess."

Chapter 95

1333

Journey to the West

Carriages were at once prepared and a line of them left the palace. Watch as Brother Monkey sprang up into the air and with a bend of his back was the first to reach the monastery. The monks all hastily knelt to greet him.

"When you left, sir," they said, "you walked with the others, so why did you come down from the sky today?"

To this Monkey replied with a smile, "Where is your ancient teacher? Ask him to come out straight away, and set out incense tables to welcome His Majesty. The king and queen of India, the officials and my master are all coming." The monks could not understand what he meant, so they asked the ancient monk to come out.

When the ancient monk saw Monkey he prostrated himself before him with the words, "What has happened about the princess, sir?" Monkey told him all about how the imitation princess had thrown the embroidered ball, wanted to mate with the Tang Priest, been chased, fought, and been recaptured by the Moon Lord as the Jade Hare. The ancient monk kowtowed to him again in thanks.

"Please stop kowtowing," said Monkey, helping him up, "please stop. Hurry up and get ready to receive His Majesty." Only then did the monks realize that it was a girl locked up in the garden at the back. Surprised and delighted, they all set out a row of incense tables outside the monastery gates, put on their cassocks and started striking the bell and the drum. Soon after this the king's carriage arrived. Indeed: The sky is filled with clouds of holy incense;

Sudden blessing comes to the monastery.

The rainbow flows for a thousand years; rivers and seas are pure.

The eternal spring round which lightning flickers is finer than those of Yu and Tang.

Thanks to the royal grace the plants' colours are finer than ever; The

wild flowers have extra fragrance because of this generosity.

Men of distinction have always left their mark behind them;

Today all rejoice at an enlightened king's arrival.

When the king arrived outside the monastery gates the monks were all lined up on their knees in orderly ranks, bowing low in greeting. Monkey stood in the middle. "How did you arrive first, holy monk?" the king asked.

"It just took a little bend of my waist for me to get here," Monkey replied.

"Why were you such a long time coming?" After this the Tang Priest and the others all arrived. He led the royal carriage to the building at the back where the princess was still raving and pretending to be crazy.

The ancient monk knelt down, pointed towards her and said, "This is Her Royal Highness the princess who was blown here by a wind the other year." The king ordered the cell opened. When the iron locks were Chapter 95

undone and the door opened the king and queen saw and recognized the princess.

Not caring about the filth, they went up to her and threw their arms round her. "Our poor child," they said,

"how did you come to suffer these torments and have so terrible a time here?" How true it is that the meeting of parents and child is not like that of other people. The three of them sobbed aloud, their arms round each other's heads. When they had cried for a while and told each other what had happened since they were parted, scented hot water was sent for. The princess bathed and changed her clothes before they all climbed into carriages to go back to the capital.

Monkey then put his hands together in greeting to the king and said, "I have something else to put to you, Your Majesty."

"Say it, whatever it is, holy monk," the king said, returning his

greeting, "and we will do as you ask."

"This mountain of theirs," Monkey replied, "is called Mount Hundredfoot. They tell me that centipedes have been turning into spirits here recently and injuring people by night. This is very awkward for travelling merchants. As I see it, only chickens can deal with centipedes, so a thousand extra－large cockerels should be chosen and then scattered across the mountainside to get rid of these venomous insects. The mountain could be renamed and you could make a land grant to these monks to thank them for looking after the princess."

This suggestion pleased the king greatly, and he accepted it. Officials were then sent back to the city to fetch cocks, while the mountain was renamed Mount Splendor. The Department of Works was instructed to provide the materials for the monastery to be rebuilt, a deed of enfeoffment was written describing the mountain as

"Mount Splendor, granted to the Almsgiver's Spread Gold Monastery," and the ancient monk was given the title National Benefactor Hierarch, a title that was to be handed on to his successors in perpetuity, together with a stipend of thirty－six bushels of grain. The monks all thanked the king for his kindness and saw him off on his way back to the capital. Here the princess returned to the inner palace and was greeted by all the ladies in turn. A banquet was then laid on to cheer the princess up and congratulate her on her deliverance. The queen and her daughter were reunited; king and ministers were together. We will not describe the night's feasting.

Early the next morning the king ordered that painters make portraits of the countenances of the four holy monks to be kept in the Sino－Barbarian Hall. The princess was also invited to come out from the throne hall in her new finery to thank the Tang Priest and the other three for saving her from her suffering. When she had thanked them the Tang Priest took his leave of the king to continue his journey West. The king refused to let them go, but ordered great banquets at which they feasted for five or six days. The idiot really was given a good time, and he enjoyed putting as much food in his stomach as he possibly could. When the king saw how determined they were to visit the Buddha he realized that no matter how hard he tried he would not be able to keep them. He had two hundred ingots of gold and silver brought out, as well as a tray of jewels for each of them as an expression of thanks. Master and disciples refused to accept anything. The king then ordered the royal carriage prepared, invited the master to enter it, and instructed officials to escort them a long way. The

queens, consorts, officials and common people all kowtowed endlessly in thanks. As they went along the way their monks all came out to kowtow to them in farewell; none of them could bear to be parted from the travelers. Seeing that the people seeing them off were unwilling to turn back. Monkey had no option but to make a spell with his hands and blow a magic breath in the direction of the trigram of the wind, Xun, so that a dark wind stopped all the escorts from seeing them. Only then did the travelers get away. This was indeed a case of

Washing away the waves of gratitude their natures returned to the end; Chapter 95

Leaving the sea of gold they were aware of true emptiness.

If you do not know what happened on the journey ahead, listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

Chapter 96

Squire Kou Entertains the Lofty Monk

The Tang Priest Does Not Covet Wealth and Honour

All kinds of matter are really without matter;

No emptiness is truly empty.

Stillness and clamour, speech and silence, all are the same:

Why bother to dream – talk in one's dreams?

The useful includes the useless in its application;

Achievement lurks within failure.

When the fruit is ripe it reddens of itself;

Do not ask how the seed is to be grown.

The story has told how the Tang Priest and his disciples used their magic powers to stop the monks of the Spread Gold Monastery. When the monks saw after the black wind had passed that the master and

his disciples had disappeared they thought that their visitors must have been living Buddhas come down to earth, so they kowtowed and went back. Of them we tell no more. As master and disciples traveled West spring was giving way to early summer:

The air was clear, mild and refreshing;

Water chestnuts and lotuses were growing in the pool.

Plums were ripening after the rain;

The wheat was forming as the breezes blew.

Flowers were fragrant where blossoms fell from trees;

The oriole grew tired amid the willow's light branches.

Swallows over the river taught their young to fly;

The pheasants fed their chirping chicks.

South of the Dipper the sun was always seen;

All of creation shone with brightness.

We could never describe in full how they ate at dawn, found shelter at dusk, rounded ravines and climbed hills as they went along their way without incident for a fortnight. Then another city wall appeared in front of them. As they came closer to it Sanzang asked, "What sort of place is this, disciple?"

"I don't know," Brother Monkey replied, "I don't know."

"You've been this way before," put in Pig, "so how can you claim that you don't know? I suppose you're being crafty and just pretending you can't recognize the place to make fools of us."

"You're being completely unreasonable, you idiot," said Monkey. "Although I've been this way several times I've always come and gone by cloud high up in the sky. I've never landed here. I had no interest in the place, so why should I have looked it over? That's why I didn't

know. I'm not being crafty, and not trying to make a fool of you either."

While they were talking they came close to the city before they realized it. Sanzang dismounted, crossed the drawbridge and went straight in through the gates. As they went along the main street there were two old men to be seen sitting under a portico and talking.

"Disciples," said Sanzang, "stand here in the middle of the road, keep your heads bowed and don't run wild. I am going under that portico to ask where we are."

Monkey and the others stood still as they had been told while the venerable elder went up to the two men, put his hands together and called out, "Greetings, benefactors." The two old men were idly chatting about such things as prosperity and decay, success and failure, sages and good men, their heroic deeds in ancient times, and where such men were now. Really, they said, it was enough to make you sigh.

When they suddenly heard Sanzang's greeting they returned it and asked, "What do you have to say to us, reverend sir?"

"I am a monk who has come from far away to worship the Lord Buddha," Sanzang replied, "and I have just arrived here. I wonder what this place is called, and where there are any pious folk from whom I might beg a meal."

"This is the prefecture of Brazentower," one of the old men said, "and this is the county of Diling near Brazentower city. If you want vegetarian food, reverend sir, you won't need to beg. Go past this archway to the street running North–south. There's a gate–tower shaped like a sitting tiger facing the East, and that's Squire Kou's house. In front of it is a sign that says 'All monks welcome'. A monk from far away such as yourself will be given all you want. Off you go, and stop interrupting our conversation."

Sanzang thanked them, turned to Monkey and said, "This is Diling county in the prefecture of Brazentower.

The two old men said that on the street running North–south past this archway there is a gate–tower shaped Chapter 96

like a sitting tiger that is Squire Kou's house. In front of it is a sign that says 'All monks welcome'. They told me to go there for a vegetarian meal."

"The West is a land of Buddhists," said Friar Sand, "and they really do feed monks. As this is only a seat of local government we don't need to present our passport. Let's go and beg ourselves a meal; that'll be all the better for travelling with." The master and his three disciples walked slowly along the main street, filling all the people in the market with alarm and suspicion as they crowded around, struggling to see what the strangers looked like.

Sanzang told his disciples to keep their mouths shut, saying, "Behave yourselves! Behave yourselves!" The three of them kept their heads bowed, not daring to look up. Then they turned a corner and did indeed see a main road running North–south.

As they were walking along it they saw a gate–tower like a sitting tiger. On a screen wall inside the gateway hung a great sign on which were written the words "All monks welcome."

"The West is indeed the land of the Buddha," said Sanzang. "Nobody, however clever or stupid, is dishonest. I did not believe what the two old men told me. Now I know it is just as they said." Being the boor that he was, Pig wanted to go straight in.

"Just a moment, idiot," said Monkey. "Wait till someone comes out so we can ask what to do before we go in."

"Big brother's right," said Friar Sand. "If we don't show respect for his privacy we might irritate the benefactor." They let the horse rest and put down the luggage outside the gates. A little later a slave came out with a steelyard and a basket in his hands that the sudden sight of the strangers made him drop in alarm.

"Master," he reported, running inside, "here are four strange–looking monks outside." At the time the gentleman was walking with a stick in the inner courtyard, reciting the name of the Buddha. When he heard the report he dropped his stick and went out to welcome them. Their ugliness did not frighten him.

"Come in, come in," he said. Behaving with all courtesy, Sanzang went inside with him.

The gentleman led them along a passageway and into a house, where he said, "The upper building includes a Buddha hall, a surra library

and a refectory for you gentlemen. The lower building is where your disciple's family lives." Sanzang expressed endless admiration. He brought out and put on his cassock to worship the Buddha, then went up into the hall to have a look. What he saw was: Clouds of incense,

Dazzling candles.

The – ball was filled with a brocade of flowers;

All around was gold and many colours.

From red frames

Hung a bell of purple gold;

On a lacquered stand

Was set a matching decorated drum.

Several pairs of banners

Were embroidered with the eight treasures;

A thousand Buddha statues

Were all covered in gold.

Ancient bronze incense – burners,

Ancient bronze vases,

Carved lacquer tables,

Carved lacquer boxes.

In the ancient bronze incense – burners

Was always eaglewood incense;

In the ancient bronze vases

Were the colours of lotus blossoms.

On the carved lacquer tables

Were fresh fruits;

In the carved lacquer boxes

Fragrant petals were piled.

In glass bowls

Was pure, clear water;

In crystal lamps

The fragrant oil shone bright.

A metal chime

Resounded long and slow.

This was like a treasure house untouched by the world,

A family Buddha hall rivaling a monastery.

Chapter 96

1339

Journey to the West

The venerable elder washed his hands, took a pinch of incense, kowtowed and worshipped, then turned back to greet the gentleman.

"Wait a moment," Mr. Kou replied. "Let us make our introductions in the sutra library." What they saw there was:

A square stand and upright cupboards,

Jade boxes and golden caskets.

On the square stand and in the upright cupboards

Were piled up countless scriptures;

In the jade boxes and golden caskets

Were stored many a manuscript.

On lacquered tables

Were paper, ink, brushes and inkstones,

All the finest treasures of the study.

Before the scented screen

Were calligraphy, paintings, a lute and chess,

All for the most refined of interests.

A magic chime of light jade covered with gold,

And a copper tripod in the wind and under the moon.

The clear breeze freshens the spirit;

The purified heart is aware; the mind set on the Way is at ease.

When the venerable elder had reached the library and was going to bow to him Mr. Kou held on to prevent this and said, "Won't you take off your cassock?" Sanzang then took off his cassock, after which he greeted Mr. Kou. He then told Monkey and the other two to greet him too. Orders were given for the horse to be fed and the luggage put in a corridor. The gentleman asked about their background.

"I have been sent by the emperor of Great Tang in the East," Sanzang said, "to the Vulture Peak in your splendid country to see the Lord Buddha and ask for the true scriptures. I am here to request a meal because I Chapter 96

have heard that in your distinguished household you honour monks. After that we will be on our way."

The gentleman's face was suffused with pleasure as he replied with a chuckle, "My name is Kou Hong, my other name is Kou Dakuan, and I have lived for sixty – four wasted years. When I was forty I made a vow to feed ten thousand monks, and you will complete the number. In the twenty – four years during which I have been feeding monks I have kept a record of their names. Having nothing else to do in recent days I have counted the names of all the monks I've fed, and the score is now 9,996. I was only short of four to make up the full number.

Then today heaven has you four teachers down to me to complete the ten thousand. Will you be so good as to tell me your names? I hope that you will stay for a month or more until I have celebrated the completion, after which I will send you teachers up the mountain in carrying – chairs or on horses. Vulture Peak is only some 250 miles from here, not at all far away." Sanzang was thoroughly delighted to hear this, and he agreed to it all at once.

Several young and old servants fetched firewood, drew water, and brought rice, flour and vegetables into the house with which to prepare them a meal. All this disturbed the gentleman's wife, who said, "Where have these monks come from, and why is everyone so busy?"

"Four eminent monks have just arrived," the servants told her, "and when the master asked them where they were from they said they'd been sent by the emperor of the Great Tang in the East to go to worship the Lord Buddha on Vulture Peak. Goodness only knows how far it is to here from there. The master said that they had been sent down from heaven and told us to get them a vegetarian meal quickly."

The old woman was also very pleased to hear this, so she told a maid to fetch her clothes so that she too could go to see them. "Only one of them is handsome, ma'am," the servant said. "The other three don't bear looking at. They're really hideous."

"What you people don't realize," the old woman replied, "is that if they look ugly, strange and freakish they must be heavenly beings come down to earth. Hurry and tell your master straight away."

The servant ran straight to the surra hall, where he said to the gentleman, "The old lady's here to pay her respects to the lords from the East." On hearing this Sanzang rose from his seat. Before the words had all been spoken the old woman was already before the hall, where she lifted her eyes to see the Tang Priest's majestic countenance and his splendid bearing. When she turned to see the extraordinary appearance of Monkey and the other two she was somewhat alarmed even though she knew they were heavenly beings come down to earth; she fell to her knees and bowed.

Sanzang quickly returned her courtesy, saying, "Bodhisattva, the honour you do me is undeserved." The old woman then asked her husband why the four reverend gentlemen were not all sitting together.

"We three are disciples," said Pig, thrusting his snout forward. Goodness! His voice was like the roar of a tiger deep in the mountains. The old woman was terrified.

As they were talking another servant appeared to announce, "The two young masters are here too." When Sanzang turned quickly round to look he saw that they were two young scholars, who prostrated themselves to the venerable elder after walking into the sutra hall. Sanzang was quick to return their courtesy. Mr. Kou then came up to take hold of him and say, "These are my two sons. Their names are Kou Liang and Kou Dong.

They have just come back from their school and have not yet had their lunch. They are here to pay their respects because they have heard that you teachers have come down to earth."

"What fine sons," said Sanzang with delight, "what fine sons. Indeed:

If you want to make a lofty match you must do good:

The success of your sons and grandsons depends on study."

The two scholars then asked their father, "Where have these lords come from?"

"From a long way away," Mr. Kou replied with a smile. "The emperor of Great Tang in the East of the Southern Continent of Jambu has sent them to Vulture Peak to worship the Lord Buddha and fetch the scriptures."

"We have read in the *Compendious Forest of Facts* that there are four continents in the world," the scholars said. "This continent of ours is the Western Continent of Cattle–gift. There is also an Eastern Continent of Superior Body. How many years did it take you to get here?"

"I have been a long time on the journey," Sanzang replied with a smile, "met many vicious demons and monsters, and suffered greatly. I have been greatly indebted to my three disciples for their protection.

Altogether it has taken me fourteen winters and summers to reach

your splendid country."

When the scholars heard this they said with unbounded admiration, "You really are holy monks, you really are."

Before they had finished speaking a servant came in to invite them to eat: "The vegetarian banquet has been set out, so will you eat, my lords?" The gentleman then sent his wife and sons back to the house, while he went with the four monks into the refectory for the meal. Everything was set out very neatly. There were gold－lacquered tables and black－lacquered chairs. In front were fine cakes of many colours that skilled chefs had made up in up－to－date styles. The second row contained five dishes of hors－d'oeuvres, in the third row there were five dishes of fruit, and in the fourth were five large dishes of snacks. Everything tasted good, looked good and smelt good. Vegetable soup, rice and steamed breadrolls were all spicy, piping hot, and most delicious. There was plenty to fill one's stomach. Seven or eight servants rushed around waiting on them, while four of five cooks were kept constantly busy. Just watch while some poured soup and others filled the rice bowls, coming and going like shooting stars chasing the moon. Pig was finishing up bowls in single mouthfuls, like a gale blowing the clouds away. Thus master and disciples ate their fill. Sanzang then rose to thank Mr. Kou for the meal before setting out again.

The gentleman blocked his way saying, "Teacher, won't you take things easy and spend a few days here? As the saying goes, it's nothing to start a journey but it's hard to end one. I will send you on your way when we have celebrated the completion of my vow." Seeing how sincere and determined he was, Sanzang had no option but to stay.

Five to seven days quickly passed before Mr. Kou engaged twenty－four local Buddhist monks to perform a mass to celebrate the fulfillment of the vow. The monks spent three or four days writing texts out and chose a lucky day on which to begin the Buddhist service. The way they did it was like in the Great Tang. There was A great display of banners,

Chapter 96

1342

Journey to the West

Where the golden countenance was set out;

Rows of candles

And incense burnt in offering.

Drums and gongs were beaten,

Pipes and shawms were played.

Cloud – cymbals,

Pure – toned flutes,

Sounded in tune;

To the beat of the drum,

And the woodwind's notes,

The words of sutras were recited in unison.

First the local god was put at ease,

Then spirit generals were invited to come.

The documents were sent out,

And they bowed low to the Buddha statues,

Reciting the Peacock Sutra,

Each word of which could sweep away disasters,

A stand of lamps was lit for Bhaisajya – guru,

To shine with flames of dazzling brightness.

They performed the Water Ceremony

To end any sense of grievance.

Then they intoned the Avatamsaka Sutra

To do away with slander.

The Three Vehicles of the Wonderful Law are very fine:

Different monks are all the same.

The mass lasted for three days and nights before it ended. In his longing to go to the Thunder Monastery the Tang Priest was determined to be on his way, so he took his leave of them and thanked them.

"Teacher, you are very eager to say good–bye," Mr. Kou said. "I suppose you must have taken offence because for days on end we have been so busy with our service that we have treated you very offhandedly."

"We have put your noble house to a great deal of trouble," Sanzang replied, "and I do not know how we will ever repay you. How could we possibly have taken offence? But when my wise monarch saw me off through the passes all those years ago he asked me when I would be back. I wrongly told him that I would return in three years, never imagining that the journey would be so badly delayed that it has already lasted fourteen years. I do not even know whether I will succeed in fetching the scriptures, and it will take me another twelve or thirteen years to get back. How am I to face the penalty for breaking my monarch's sage command? I beg you, sir, to let me go to fetch the scriptures and return. Next time I come to your mansion I will be able to stay much longer."

This was more than Pig could bear. "You don't care at all about what we want, Master," he shouted at the top of his voice. "You're showing no consideration at all. The old gentleman's very rich, and now he's fulfilled his vow to feed monks. Besides, he's really sincere about wanting to keep us here. It'd do no harm if we stayed here for a year or so. Why be so set on going? Why leave all this good food to go begging for meals elsewhere? Is it your parents' home ahead?"

"All you care about is food, you cretin," shouted Sanzang angrily. "You don't care at all about the transference of cause and effect. Really, you're such an animal you'd eat from the trough to scratch the itch in your belly. If you people are going to be so greedy and stupid I'll go by myself tomorrow."

Seeing that the master's attitude had changed, Monkey grabbed hold of Pig and punched his head. "You've got no sense, you idiot," he said abusively. "You've made the master angry with us too."

"He deserved that," said Friar Sand with a grin, "he deserved that. He's disgusting enough even if he doesn't say a word, but he would have to interrupt." Breathing heavily, the idiot stood to one side, not daring to say another word.

Seeing the anger of master and disciple, Mr. Kou said, his face wreathed in smiles, "Do not be so short－tempered, teacher. Make yourself comfortable for the rest of the day. Tomorrow I will have banners and drums brought here and ask some relations and neighbors to come to see you off."

As they were talking the old woman come out again to say. "Venerable teacher, as you have come to our house you should not refuse too insistently. How many days have you spent here now?"

"It is already a fortnight," Sanzang replied.

"That fortnight is my gentleman's achievement," the old woman said. "I have a little pin－money with which I would like to entertain you gentlemen for another fortnight."

Before she had finished speaking Kou Dong and his brother came out again to say, "Your four lordships, in the twenty and more years during which our father has been feeding monks he has never met better ones than yourselves. Now that by your gracious condescension you have made up the total you really have brought glory to our thatched hovel. We two are too young to understand about cause and effect, but we have often heard it said,

Chapter 96

1344

Journey to the West

The husband gets what he has merited,

The wife gets what she has merited;

Nothing is got when nothing is merited.

Our father and mother each want to make a humble offering in order that each of them may merit a reward, so why must you refuse so insistently? And as we two brothers have saved a little of our school fees we hope to be allowed to support you gentlemen for another fortnight before seeing you on your way.

"I dare not accept even the lavish hospitality of the venerable Bodhisattva your mother," Sanzang replied, "so how could I accept you brothers' generosity? I could not possibly do so. I really must set out today. Please, please do not take offence. If I do not go now I will be unable to avoid execution for exceeding my emperor's time–limit by so long."

When the old woman and her two sons realized that Sanzang was determined not to stay they started losing their patience.

"We invite you very nicely to stay," they said, "but you're obstinately set on going. If you're going, go, and cut out this chatter." Mother and sons then left to go back to the house. Pig could hold his tongue no longer.

"Master," he said to the Tang Priest, "don't overdo it. As the saying goes, 'If you can stay, don't go away.' Let's stay here for another month to let the mother and her sons fulfil their wishes. Why do you have to be in such a rush?" The Tang Priest made another angry noise at him and shouted again.

The idiot then slapped his own face twice, saying, "Tut, tut, tut. Don't talk out of turn. You spoke again."

Brother Monkey and Friar Sand, who were standing to one side, started spluttering with laughter. The Tang Priest was angry with Monkey again.

"What are you laughing at?" he asked, and made the hand magic, ready to recite the Band–tightening Spell.

This so terrified Monkey that he fell to his knees at once and said, "I didn't laugh, Master. Whatever you do, don't say the spell! Don't say it!"

Seeing that master and disciples were getting into a worse and worse temper with each other Mr. Kou gave up his insistence on their staying. "Don't quarrel, teachers," he said, "I'll definitely see you on your way tomorrow morning." He then left the sutra hall and told his secretary to write a hundred or so invitations to his neighbors and relations to see the Tang Priest off to the West early the next morning. He told the cooks to lay on a parting banquet, while also instructing his steward to have twenty pairs of coloured flags made, hire a band of musicians, and engage a group of Buddhist monks from the Monastery from the South and another group of Taoist priests from the Eastern Peak Temple. Everything was to be ready and in order by

ten in the morning.

All the gentleman's staff went off to carry out their orders. Soon it was evening again, and after supper everyone went to bed. It was the time when

Dots of homegoing rooks pass the lonely village;

Drum and bell can be heard from each other's distant towers.

Chapter 96

1345

Journey to the West

In streets and markets the bustle is stilled;

In all the houses the lamps shine dimly.

Flowers in the breeze throw shadows under the moon;

The stars shine bright against the Milky Way.

Where the cuckoo sings the night seems deeper;

All natural sounds are stilled across the earth.

During the third and fourth watches of the night all the household servants in charge of various matters got up early to attend to their tasks. Just watch. The cooks preparing the banquet were busy in the kitchen. The people who had to buy coloured flags were bustling in front of the hall. Those engaging Buddhist and Taoist clergy were hurrying about as fast as their legs could carry them. Those hiring musicians were in a great rush.

The messengers delivering invitations ran all over the place, while the servants preparing the carrying – chairs and horses were calling to each other. They were all shouting from the middle of the night until dawn, and by around ten o'clock everything was prepared. This was all because the family was rich.

The story tells how the Tang Priest and his disciples got up early to be waited on once more by that crowd of servants. The venerable elder told them to pack the baggage and saddle the horse. When the idiot heard that they were about to go he pulled a face, pouted and grumbled, but he still had to pack the clothes and begging bowls then

go to look for the carrying pole. Friar Sand brushed the horse, saddled and harnessed it, and stood waiting. Brother Monkey put the nine－ringed monastic staff in his master's hand and hung the passport in a bag in front of his chest. They were now all ready to set out. Mr. Kou then invited them into the large hall at the back, where a feast was set out that excelled even the one they had eaten in the refectory.

Curtains hung from on high;

Screens stood all around.

In the middle was a picture:

A mountain of long life and a sea of blessings.

On both walls were displayed.

Scrolls of spring, summer, autumn and winter.

From the dragon－patterned tripod came clouds of incense;

Above magpie－tailed burners rose auspicious vapors.

In bowls were bunches of color,

Fresh and brilliant flowers of splendid form.

Chapter 96

1346

Journey to the West

The tables were piled with gold:

Lines of confections shaped like lions and immortals.

Music and dancing before the steps were in true harmony;

The dishes in the hall were like a brocade.

Exquisite soup and rice, both free of meat;

The finest tea and the best of wines.

Although they were only commoners

Their home was fine enough for a prince.

All that could be heard were happy sounds

So loud they surprised the sky and shook the earth.

The venerable elder was just exchanging courtesies with Mr. Kou when a servant came in to report, "The guests are all here." These were the people who had been invited — —neighbors, relations by marriage, and some of his pious friends who also fed monks and recited the name of the Buddha — —and all of them bowed to the venerable elder. After the greetings had been made everyone sat down. Outside the hall zithers and panpipes were played, while inside the hall pipas and songs accompanied the banquet. Pig paid great attention to this rich banquet.

"Brother," he said to Friar Sand, "relax and eat as much as you can. There won't be anything as good as this to eat after we leave the Kou house."

"Nonsense," Friar Sand replied with a laugh. "As the saying goes, No matter how splendid the banquet you eat,

For only a while can it keep you replete.

Your savings may meet the expense of the road,

But savings can never in bellies be stowed."

"You're hopeless," said Pig, "hopeless. If I eat my fill today I won't feel hungry for the next three days."

"Idiot," said Monkey, who had heard this. "Don't fill your belly till it bursts. We've got to start walking now."

They were still talking, and it was almost noon when Sanzang raised his chopsticks and said grace. Pig grabbed a bowl, filled it with desperate speed, and ate five or six bowlfuls in succession, gulping down a whole bowlful at a time. Without any qualms at all he filled both his sleeves with steamed bread, twists, Chapter 96

pancakes and cooked dishes before rising with his master. Sanzang thanked the gentleman and everyone else, then they all went outside together. Just look at the coloured banners, splendid canopies,

drummers and instrumentalists outside. Only then did two groups of clergy, one Buddhist and one Taoist, arrive.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Kou, "you are late. Our teacher is in a hurry to leave, so I will not be able to offer you a meal. I'll show you my gratitude when we come back." Everyone then opened a way to let them through, the carriers carrying their chairs, the riders on their horses and the walkers on foot all let Sanzang and his three disciples go first. The heavens rang with drumming and music, the flags and banner blotted out the sun, crowds pressed around, and carriages and horses were all packed close together as everyone came to watch Mr. Kou seeing the Tang Priest off. The splendor all around was more magnificent than pearls or jade, and no less fine than brocade screens behind which spring lies hidden.

The Buddhist monks playing Buddhist tunes and the Taoist priests their Taoist airs all escorted the travelers out of the prefecture. When they reached the three-mile pavilion, baskets of food and jars of drink were set out, cups were raised, and they all drank parting toasts.

Mr. Kou, loath to let them go, said as he choked back his tears, "Teacher, you must spend some more days with us on your way back with the scriptures to fulfil my longing." Overcome with gratitude, Sanzang thanked him at great length.

"If I reach Vulture Peak," he said, "and see the Lord Buddha the first thing I will do will be to praise your great virtue. We will certainly come to kowtow to you in thanks on our return journey." As they talked they covered another mile or so without noticing it. Then the venerable elder insisted on taking his leave, at which Mr. Kou turned back, sobbing aloud. Indeed:

He who had vowed to feed the clergy found enlightenment:

He was not fated to see the Tathagata Buddha.

We will tell not of how Mr. Kou went home with everyone after seeing the travelers off as far as the three-mile pavilion, but of how the master and his three disciples went on for some twelve or fifteen miles.

By now it was growing dark.

"It's late," Sanzang said. "Where are we to spend the night?"

Pig, who was carrying the pole, pulled a face and said, "You would

have to leave ready – cooked meals behind and refuse to stay in a nice cool brick house so as to go wherever it is we're going. That's just asking for trouble. It's very late now. What'll we do if it starts raining?"

"Evil, insolent beast," cursed Sanzang, "complaining again. As the saying goes, The capital may be remarkably fine,

But we can't linger here for a very long time.

Chapter 96

1348

Journey to the West

If we are fated to visit the Lord Buddha, fetch the true scriptures, go back to Great Tang and report to the emperor I will let you eat in the imperial kitchens for years on end. Then, you evil beast, you will swell up till you burst. That will teach you to be such a greedy devil." The idiot chortled quietly to himself, but did not dare say another word.

When Brother Monkey raised his eyes to look around he saw some buildings beside the road and asked his master urgently, "Can we spend the night here? Can we?" Sanzang went over to the place, where he saw a ruined memorial arch on which was inscribed

THE VIHARA OF PADMAPRABHA

"The Bodhisattva Padmaprabha was a disciple of the Buddha Sikhin," said Sanzang, dismounting. "He was dismissed for eliminating the Demon King of Poison Fire and turned into the Spirit Officer of the Five Manifests. There must be a shrine here." They then all went in together. The cloisters had all collapsed, the walls had fallen down, and there was no trace of anybody around, only of vegetation running wild. They would have gone out again, but the sky had filled with dark clouds and it had started to pour with rain. There was nothing for it but to find a place in the ruins where they could shelter from the storm. They kept completely silent, not daring to speak aloud for fear that some evil demon might hear them. Thus it was that they endured a sleepless night sitting or standing there. Oh dear! How true it is that Disaster strikes at triumph's height;

In time of joy comes sorrow's blight.

If you don't know what happened when they carried on with their

journey, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 97

The Monks and Their Supporters Meet With Demonic Attack

The Sage Makes the Spirit Reappear to Save the Primal One

We will tell not of how the Tang Priest and the others endured a hard night in the dilapidated palace of Padmaprabha, but of a group of evil villains in Diling county in the prefecture of Brazentower who had squandered all their families' fortunes in whoring, drinking and gambling. Having nothing else left to live on they had formed a criminal gang of a dozen and more members and were discussing which family was the richest in the city and which the second richest. The idea was to rob them of their gold and silver and thus get some money to spend.

"There's no need to go round making enquiries," one of them said, "or work it out in detail. The Mr. Kou who saw the Tang monk off today is rolling in money. Let's strike tonight in the rain. There'll be nobody ready for us in the streets and the fire wardens won't be patrolling. When we've stolen his property we'll be able to go with the girls, gamble and have a good time again. That would be great, wouldn't it?"

The other robbers were all delighted with the suggestion, and with one heart they all set out in the rain carrying daggers, spiked clubs, sticks, coshes, ropes and torches. Flinging open the main gates of the Kou house they charged inside, shouting and sending everyone inside, young and old, male and female, scurrying into hiding. The old woman hid under the bed and the old man slipped behind the gates, while Kou Liang, Kou Dong and their families fled for their lives in all directions. Holding their knives in their hands and lighting torches, the bandits opened up all the chests in the house and grabbed as much of the gold, silver, jewelry, hair ornaments, clothing, vessels and other household goods as they wanted. Mr. Kou could not bear to lose all this, so taking his life in his hands he come out from behind the gate to plead with the robbers.

"Take as much as you want, great kings," he said, "but please leave me a few clothes to be buried in." The robbers were in no mood for argument. They rushed up to him, tripped and kicked him to the ground. Alas, His three souls vanished to the underworld;

His seven spirits left the world of men.

The successful robbers left the Kou house, put up a rope ladder from the foot of the city wall, took it in turns to cross and fled Westwards in the rain. Only when they saw that the robbers had gone did the servants of the Kou family dare show their heads again. When they looked for old Mr. Kou and found him lying dead on the floor they started weeping aloud. "Heavens! The master's been murdered!" they all said as they wept, embracing the body and sobbing in misery.

When it was almost the fourth watch the resentful Mrs. Kou, who was angry with the Tang Priest and his followers for rejecting their hospitality, and also because the extravagance of their send–off had provoked this disaster, decided to ruin the four of them. Helping Kou Liang to his feet, she said, "Don't cry, my son. Your father fed monks day in and day out. Who ever would have thought that he would complete the number by feeding a gang of monks who'd murder him?"

"Mother," the brothers asked, "how did those monks murder him?"

"Those bandits were so bold and vicious that when they charged in I hid under the bed," she replied.

"Although I was trembling I made sure to take a very good look at them by the light of the torches. Do you know who they were? The Tang Priest was lighting torches, Pig was holding a knife, Friar Sand was taking the gold and silver, and Monkey killed your father." The two sons believed all this.

"If you saw all that clearly, mother," they said, "you must be right. They spent a fortnight in our house, so they knew all the doors, walls, windows and passageways. They must have been tempted by our wealth and come back here under cover of rain and darkness. How evil! They've stolen our property and murdered our father. Once it's light we'll go to the local government and report them as wanted men."

"What sort of wanted notice should we write?" Kou Dong asked.

Chapter 97

"We'll write what our mother said," Kou Liang replied, and he wrote: The Tang Priest lit the torches, Pig incited to murder, Friar Sand stole the gold and silver and Sun the Novice murdered our father.

The whole household was in such a hubbub that before they noticed it day had dawned. While invitations were sent out to their relatives and a coffin was ordered Kou Liang and his brother went to the local government offices to deposit their complaint. Now the prefect of Brazentower: Had always been upright,

Was good by nature.

As a boy he had studied by the light of the snow;

When young he had taken the palace examinations.

His heart was always set on loyalty and justice,

And filled with thoughts of kindness and benevolence.

His name would be transmitted in annals for a thousand years,

Like a Gong Sui or Huang Ba come back to life;

His fame would resound for ten thousand ages in the balls of office, Zhuo Mao and Lu Gong reborn.

When he had taken his seat in the hall and declared that all matters could be dealt with, he ordered that the placard asking for plaints should be carried outside. Kou Liang and his brother then came in holding the placard, knelt down and called aloud, "Your Honour, we have come to denounce some bandits as thieves and murderers." The prefect accepted their complaint and read what it had to say.

"I was told yesterday that your family completed your vow of feeding monks," the prefect said, "by feeding four distinguished ones, arhats from the Tang Dynasty in the East. You made a great display of sending them off with drums and music. So how could such a thing as this have possibly happened?"

"Your Honour," said Kou Liang, kowtowing, "our father Kou Hong had been feeding monks for twenty – four years. These four monks who had come from afar just happened to make up the ten thousand,

which was why he held a service to mark the completion and kept them there for a fortnight. They got to know all the passageways, doors and windows. They were seen off during the day and came back yesterday evening.

During the dark and stormy night they charged into the house with torches and weapons to steal our gold, Chapter 97

1351

Journey to the West

silver, jewelry, clothes and hair ornaments. They beat our father to death and left him lying on the ground. We beg you to be our protector." On hearing this the prefect mustered infantry, cavalry and able－bodied civilian conscripts, 150 men in all, who rushed straight out of the Western gate carrying sharp weapons in pursuit of the Tang Priest and his three disciples.

The story now tells how master and disciples stayed in the ruins of the minor palace of padmaprabha until dawn, when they went out and started hurrying Westwards. The bandits, who had gone along the main road West all night till daybreak after robbing the Kou family and leaving the city, had passed the palace of Padmaprabha and hidden in the mountains some six or seven miles to the West. Here they were just dividing up the gold and silver when the Tang Priest and his three followers came into view, also heading West along the road.

The bandits, whose greed was not yet sated, pointed at the Tang Priest and said, "Look! Aren't they the monks who were seen off yesterday?"

"And a very welcome arrival too," said the other bandits, laughing, "Let's do a bit more of our dirty business.

Those monks coming along the road spent a long time in the Kou house. Goodness only knows how much stuff they're carrying. Let's hold them up, take their travel money and white horse, and share it all out. That'll suit us very nicely." The robbers then rushed to the road, brandishing their weapons and yelling their war cry as they formed a line.

"Stay where you are, monks," they shouted. "Leave some toll money and we'll spare your lives. If so much as half a 'no' comes out through your teeth you'll all be cut down without mercy." The Tang Priest was shaking with terror as he sat on his horse.

"What are we to do?" Pig and Friar Sand asked Brother Monkey with alarm. "What are we to do? We had a miserable night in the rain, and after starting out again this morning we're being robbed by bandits. How true is it that troubles never come singly."

"Don't be frightened, Master," said Monkey with a smile, "and stop worrying, brothers. Wait while I go and ask them a few questions."

The splendid Great Sage put on his tigerskin kilt, straightened up his brocade and cotton tunic, went up to them, put his hands together in front of his chest and asked, "What are you gentlemen doing?"

"Don't you care whether you live or die, you swine?" the robbers yelled back at him. "How dare you question us! Have you got no eyes in your head? Don't you realize who we great kings are? Hand your toll money over at once and we'll let you go on your way."

When he heard this, Monkey wreathed his face in smiles and replied, "So you're bandits who hold people up on the road."

"Kill him!" the bandits yelled with fury.

"Your Majesties," said Monkey with feigned terror, "Your Majesties, I'm only a monk from the country. I don't know the right things to say. Please don't be angry if I've offended you, please don't. If what you want is toll money all you have to do is to ask me: no need to ask the other three. I'm the bookkeeper. All the money we get for chanting sutras and as alms, all we beg and all we're given, goes into the bundles, and I'm in charge of spending it. The man on the horse is my master. All he can do is recite sutras. He doesn't care about Chapter 97

anything else. He's forgotten all about wealth and sex, and he's got nothing at all. The black–faced one is a junior I collected on our journey. All he can do is look after the horse. And the one with a long snout is a laborer I hired. He's only good for carrying a pole. Let those three go while I fetch our travel money, cassocks and begging bowls. I'll give you all you want."

"You seem to be an honest chap, monk," the robbers said, "so we'll spare your life. Tell the other three to leave their luggage, and we'll let them go." Monkey turned back and gave them a look. Friar Sand put down the carrying–pole with the luggage, and led the master's horse

as they carried on Westwards. Monkey bowed down to undo the bundle, took a pinch of dust from the ground, and scattered it on the bundle as he said the words of a spell.

It was body–fixing magic, so the moment he shouted, "Stop!" the thirty and more bandits all stood stock still, grinding their teeth, staring, their hands apart. None of them could speak or move.

"Come back, Master," shouted Monkey, "come back!"

"This is terrible," said Pig in alarm, "this is terrible. Big brother's informed on us. He isn't carrying any money on him, and there's no gold or silver in the bundle. He must be calling the master back to ask him to give up his horse. He's going to get the clothes stripped off our backs."

"Don't talk such rubbish, brother," said Friar Sand with a laugh. "Big brother knows what he's doing. He's always been able to beat vicious monsters and demons up till now, so what do we have to fear from a few petty thieves? He must be calling us back because he's got something to say to us. Let's go straight there and find out."

When the venerable elder heard this he cheerfully turned his horse round and went back. "Wukong," he called,

"why have you called us back?"

"Hear what these robbers have got to say for themselves," Brother Monkey said.

Pig went up to them, shoved them and asked, "Why don't you move, bandits?" The bandits remained completely unconscious and said nothing.

"They're thick, and dumb too," said Pig.

"I fixed them by magic," said Monkey with a laugh.

"Even if you fixed them," said Pig, "you didn't fix their mouths, so why aren't they making a sound?"

"Please dismount and sit down, Master," said Brother Monkey. "As the saying goes, 'People only get arrested by mistake; they never get released by mistake.' Knock all the robbers over, brother, and tie them up. Then we'll force them to make statements. Find out if they're beginners or old hands."

"Haven't got any rope," said Friar Sand. Monkey then pulled out some of his hairs, blew on them with magic breath and turned them into thirty lengths of rope. They all set to, knocked the robbers over, and tied their hands and feet together. Then Monkey said the words that ended the spell, whereupon the bandits gradually revived.

Monkey invited the Tang Priest to take the seat of honour while he and the other two shouted, holding their weapons, "Hairy bandits! How many of you are there altogether, and how many years have you been in this line of business? How many things have you stolen? Have you murdered anyone? Is this your first offence?

Or your second? Or your third?"

"Spare our lives, your lordships," pleaded the robbers.

"Stop shouting," said Monkey, "and come clean."

"We aren't hardened robbers, your lordships," they said. "We're all from good families. Because we're a bad lot we squandered all the wealth we'd inherited in drinking, gambling, whoring and living it up. We've never worked, and now we've got no money either. We found out that Mr. Kou's family was one of the richest in the prefecture of Brazentower, so last night we got together to rob it under cover of darkness and rain. We stole some gold, silver, clothing and jewelry, and were just dividing it up in a mountain hollow to the North of the track when we noticed you gentlemen coming. Some of us recognized you as the monks Mr. Kou saw off, so we were sure that you must have some goods on you. Then we saw how heavy your luggage was and how fast the white horse was going. It was our disgraceful greed that made us try to hold you up. Never did we imagine that you would have such divine powers and be able to tie us up. We beg you to be merciful to us. Take back what we stole and spare our lives."

Sanzang was violently shocked to hear that their booty had been stolen from the Kou household. He stood up at once and said, "Mr. Kou was a very good man, Wukong, so how did he bring such a disaster on himself?"

"It was all because the coloured hangings and fancy parasols, and the

huge numbers of drummers and musicians when we were seen off attracted too much attention," replied Monkey with a smile. "That's why this gang of desperadoes attacked his house. Luckily they ran into us, and we've taken back all the gold, silver, clothing and jewelry."

"We put Mr. Kou out for a whole fortnight," said Sanzang, "so we owe him a huge debt of gratitude that we have not yet been able to repay. Would it not be a good deed to return this property to his house?" Monkey agreed, and he went to the mountain hollow with Pig and Friar Sand to fetch the booty, which they packed up and loaded on the horse. He told Pig to carry the load of gold and silver while friar Sand carried their own luggage. Monkey was just on the point of killing all the bandits with his cudgel when he had the worrying thought that the Tang Priest might get angry with him for committing murder. So he could only shake himself and take back all the hairs. Now that their hands and feet had been untied the thieves all got up then fled for their lives into the undergrowth. The Tang Priest then turned back the way he had come to return the booty to Mr. Kou. In making this journey he was like a moth flying into a flame and coming to disaster. There is a poem about it that goes:

Kindness to others is rarely with kindness rewarded;

Kindness will often to hate and hostility lead.

Plunge in the water to rescue the drowning? You'll suffer.

Think before acting and spare yourself grief you don't need.

Sanzang and his disciples were just heading back with the gold, silver, clothing and jewelry when the crowd of men armed with spears and swords arrived. "Disciples," said Sanzang with alarm, "look at all those armed men coming here. What is happening?"

Chapter 97

1354

Journey to the West

"It's a disaster," said Pig, "a disaster. They're the robbers we set free. They've found weapons and ganged up with some more people. Now they've come back and they're going to kill us."

"They don't look like bandits, brother," said Friar Sand. "Big brother, take a closer look."

"The master's in bad trouble again," Monkey whispered to Friar Sand. "These must be soldiers here to capture the bandits." Before he had finished saying this the soldiers were upon the master and his disciples, surrounding them.

"You're a fine bunch of monks," they said, "robbing a house then swaggering around here like this." They then rushed them, dragged the Tang Priest off his horse and tied him up. Next they tied up Brother Monkey and the others, and carried them off hanging from poles, two men to each of them. Driving the horse along and seizing the baggage, they went back to the prefectural city. This is what could be seen: The Tang Priest,

Shivering and shaking,

Weeping and lost for words.

Zhu Bajie,

Muttering and grumbling,

Full of complaints.

Friar Sand,

Talking away,

While secretly feeling uncertain.

Sun the Novice,

Chuckling merrily,

Ready to use his powers.

Hustled and carried along by the soldiers, they were soon back in the city, where the soldiers escorted them straight to the prefect's court.

"Your Honour," they reported, "the constables have captured the robbers and brought them back." The prefect, sitting in his place in the court, rewarded the constables, inspected the booty and sent for the Kou family to collect it. Then he had Sanzang and the others brought into court.

"You monks maintain that you come from a place far away to the East and are going to worship the Buddha in the Western Heaven," he said, interrogating them. "But really you're housebreakers who used dirty

that you could get to know your way around."

"Your Honour," Sanzang replied, "we are not robbers. I would not dare to deceive you. We carry a passport with us as proof. It was because we were so grateful to Mr. Kou's family for feeding us for a fortnight that when we ran into the robbers along our way we recovered the booty they had stolen from the Kou house. We were taking it back to the Kou house to pay our debt of gratitude when to our astonishment we were arrested as robbers by the constables. We really are not robbers, and I beg Your Honour to investigate closely."

"You only made up that fancy talk about paying a debt of gratitude because you were arrested by the soldiers," the prefect replied. "If you really met other robbers why didn't you show your gratitude by capturing them and turning them in? Why are only the four of you here? Look at the wanted notice Kou Liang submitted. He accuses you by name. How dare you still dispute it!" When Sanzang heard this he felt like a storm–tossed boat on the ocean, and all his souls flew away.

"Wukong," he said, "why don't you come forward and argue in our defense?"

"The booty proves it," said Monkey. "Arguing would do no good."

"That's right," the prefect said. "The booty is all here as proof. Do you still dare to deny it? Fetch the head–clamp," he instructed his underlings, "and put it round the head of the bald robber. Then beat him again."

Monkey was now very anxious. "Even though my master is fated to suffer this," he thought to himself, "I mustn't let it be too tough for him." Seeing the yamen runners tightening the cord to fix the head–clamp in place he opened his mouth to speak.

"Please don't squeeze that monk's head, Your Honour. When we robbed the Kou house last night I was the one who lit the torches, carried the sword, stole the goods and killed the man. I was the ringleader. If you want to torture anyone, torture me. It's nothing to do with them. The only thing is that you mustn't let me go."

On hearing this the prefect ordered, "Put the clamp on him first." The underlings then all fell on Monkey, fixed the clamp on his head, and tightened it so hard that the cord snapped with a twang. The clamp was fastened, tightened and snapped with a twang again. They did this three or four times, and the skin on his head was not even creased.

When they changed the cord and were tightening it again someone was heard coming in to report, "Your Honour, the Lord Assistant Protector Chen from the capital is coming. Will you please come to greet him outside the city?"

The prefect then ordered the head torturer, "Throw the bandits into gaol and keep a good eye on them. The torture and interrogation will continue after I have gone to greet my superior." The head torturer then marched the Tang Priest and the other three into the gaol. Pig and Friar Sand carried their luggage in with them.

"Disciple," said Sanzang, "what are we to do?"

"In you go, Master," said Monkey with a grin, "in you go. There aren't any dogs barking in there. It'll be a lark." The four of them were then taken inside, and each of them was pushed on a torture rack, to which their bellies, heads and chests were tightly fastened. The warders then started beating them up again.

Finding the agony unbearable, Sanzang called out, "Whatever shall I do, Wukong? Whatever shall I do?"

Chapter 97

1356

Journey to the West

"They're beating us because they want money," Brother Monkey replied. "As the saying goes, Stay put when things are going well;

Spend cash when things are going ill.

They'll stop if you give them some money."

"But where am I to get money from?" Sanzang asked.

"If you haven't any money," Monkey replied, "clothes will do. Give them the cassock."

These words cut Sanzang to the heart, but realizing that the beating was more than he could take he could only say, "Do as you will, Wukong."

"Gentlemen," Monkey called out, "there's no need to beat us any more. There's a brocade cassock in one of the two bundles we brought in with us that's worth a fortune. Open them up and take it." When the warders heard this they all set to together, opening the bundles up to search them. There were some cotton clothes and a document case, but none of these were worth anything. Seeing something glowing brightly inside several layers of oiled paper the warders realized that it must be a treasure. When they shook it open and looked at it, this is what it looked like:

Exquisitely decorated with shining pearls,

Set with some wonderful Buddha treasures.

Embroidered dragons curled around;

Flying phoenixes adorned brocade edges.

As they all struggled to look they disturbed the head gaoler, who came up to them and shouted, "What are you all making this row about?"

Falling to their knees, the warders replied, "His Honour has just started a case against four monks and sent them here. When we roughed them up a bit they gave us these two bundles. After we opened them we saw this, and we don't know how to deal with it. It would be a real pity to tear it up to divide between us, but it would be hard on everyone else if just one of us had it. It's a good thing you've come, sir: you can give us a ruling." The head gaoler could see that it was a cassock. Then he inspected the other clothes and the document case, and on opening the case to read the passport he saw that it was covered with seals and signatures from many states.

"It's a good thing I saw this in time," he said. "If I hadn't, you people would have caused bad trouble. These monks aren't robbers. On no account touch their things. When His Honour questions them again tomorrow Chapter 97

we'll find out the truth." The warders then gave the wrapping cloths

back to the prisoners, who repacked them and handed them over to the head gaoler for safekeeping.

Evening was slowly drawing in. The drum could be heard from its tower, and the fire wardens began their patrols. By the third mark of the fourth watch Monkey could see that the others had stopped groaning and were fast asleep. "The master was fated to meet with the hardship of a night in gaol," he thought. "That was why I said nothing in our defense and didn't use my magic powers. But now the fourth watch is nearly over, and his suffering's almost done. I'd better start getting things sorted out if we're to leave this gaol at dawn."

Just watch as he uses his powers to make himself smaller, get off the rack, shake himself and turn into a midge who flies out of the prison through a gap between the tiles over the eaves. By the light of the stars and the moon in the still, silent night sky, he could see where he was going, and he flew quietly straight towards the gates of the Kou house. On the West side of the road was a house where a lamp was shining brightly, and as he flew closer for a better look he saw that it was a house of beancurd—makers. An old man could be seen looking after the fire while an old woman was squeezing out the bean juice.

"Wife," the old man suddenly called out, "Mr. Kou had wealth and sons, but he didn't live long. When we were boys we were both at school together. I was five years older than him. His father was called Kou Ming.

In those days he had less than 150 acres. He couldn't even collect his overdue rents. Old Kou Ming died when his son was nineteen, and once the young man took charge of the household things went really well. He married the daughter of Zhang Wang— —she used to be known as Threadneedle when she was a girl, but she made her husband a rich man. Once she came into his house his crops were good and the debts to him got paid. Whatever he bought showed a profit, and whatever he went in for made money. His family's worth a hundred thousand now. When he reached forty he turned pious and he fed ten thousand monks. Fancy him being kicked to death by robbers last night! Poor man. He was only sixty—four. Who would have thought so good a man would meet with so evil a reward and be murdered just when everything was going well for him?

What a pity! What a pity!"

By the time Monkey had listened to all this it was now at the first mark of the fifth watch. He then flew into the Kou house, where a

coffin was placed in the main room. A lamp was burning at the head, and around the coffin was incense, candles and fruit. His wife was weeping beside him, and the two sons also came to kowtow and weep, while their wives brought two bowls of rice as an offering. Monkey landed at the head of the coffin and coughed. This gave the two daughters – in – law such a fright that they ran outside waving their arms about.

Kou Liang and his brother lay on the floor, too terrified to move, and crying out, "Oh, father, oh!" Their mother, being bolder, hit the head of the coffin and said, "Have you come back to life, old man?"

"No," replied Monkey, imitating Mr. Kou's voice, to the great alarm of the two sons, who kept kowtowing, weeping, and repeating, "Oh, Father, oh!"

Their mother summoned up even more courage to ask, "Husband, if you haven't come back to life why are you talking?"

"King Yama has sent demons to bring me here to talk to you," Monkey replied. "He told me that Threadneedle Zhang had been lying and trying to frame the innocent."

In her surprise at hearing him call her by the name she had been known as a child, the old woman fell at once to her knees, kowtowed and said, "You're a fine old man! Fancy calling me by my childhood name at this age!

What lies have I been telling? Which innocent people have I framed?"

Chapter 97

1358

Journey to the West

"Wasn't there something about 'The Tang Priest lit the torches, Pig incited to murder, Friar Sand stole the gold and silver, and Sun the Novice murdered our father?'" Monkey replied. "Your lies have landed those good men in terrible trouble. What really happened was that the Tang Priest and the other three teachers met some bandits and got our property back for us to show their thanks. How good of them! But you had to concoct a wanted notice and send our sons to denounce them to the authorities. The court threw them in gaol without making a careful investigation. The gaol god, the local deity and the city god were all so alarmed and uneasy that they reported it to King Yama,

and he ordered demons to escort me back home. I'm to tell you to have them released as soon as possible. If you don't, I will have to make havoc here for a month. Nobody in the household, young or old ——not even the dogs and the chickens——will be spared."

Kou Liang and his brother kowtowed again and begged, "Please go back, Father, and don't harm us all. At dawn we'll submit a petition to the court for their release and withdraw our charge against them. We only want peace for both the living and the dead."

When Monkey heard this he called out, "Burn sacrificial paper money. I am leaving." All his family started burning paper money. Monkey then rose up on his wings and flew straight to the prefect's residence. Bending low to look he saw that there was a light in the bedroom: the prefect was already up. When Monkey flew into the main room, he saw a scroll—painting hanging on the back wall. It showed an official riding a piebald horse with several servants holding a blue umbrella and carrying a folding chair. Monkey did not know what the picture was about, but landed in the middle of it. All of a sudden the prefect came out of the bedroom and bent low to comb and wash himself. Monkey gave a sharp cough, alarming the prefect and sending him hurrying back into his bedroom. When he had combed his hair, washed himself and put on his formal clothes the prefect came out to burn incense to the picture and pray to it.

"Venerable uncle, divine Jiang Qianyi, your dutiful nephew Jiang Kunsan is now prefect of Brazentower, thanks to the hereditary privilege won for me by your ancestral virtue, and also to my success in the examinations. Morning and evening I offer incense without interruption. Why did you speak today? I beg you not to haunt us and terrify the household."

"So this is a holy picture of his ancestor," Brother Monkey thought with a hidden smile, and making the most of this chance he called out, "Nephew Kunsan, you have always been uncorrupt in the office you were given through ancestral privilege. How could you have been so stupid yesterday? You took four holy monks for thieves and threw them into prison without finding out why they had come. The prison god, the local deity and the city god were all so disturbed by this that they reported it to the king of Hell. He told demon envoys to bring me here to speak to you and advise you to consider the circumstances and find out the truth, and release them at once. Otherwise you'll have to come back to the Underworld with me for the case to be sorted out."

When the prefect heard this he replied in terror, "Please go back now,

sit. Your nephew will go straight into court and release them at once."

"Very well then," Monkey said. "Burn some sacrificial paper money. I am going to report back to King Yama." The prefect lit incense, burned paper money and bowed in thanks. When Monkey flew out again and looked around he saw that the East was already turning white. He then flew to the Diling county office, where all the county officials could be seen in the courtroom.

"If I talk when I'm a midge," he thought, "and someone spots me it'll give the game away. That wouldn't do."

So he gave himself a giant magical body where he was in mid air, and stretched down one foot that filled the whole courtroom. "Listen to me, you officials," he shouted. "I am the Roving God Rambler, sent here by the Jade Emperor. He says that sons of the Buddha on their way to fetch the scriptures have been beaten up in the prefectural gaol here, which has disturbed the gods of the three worlds. He has asked me to tell you to release them at once. If anything goes wrong I'm to use my other foot to kick all you county and prefecture officials

to death, then crush all the people around here and trample the whole city to dust and ashes." At this the county magistrate and the other officials all fell to their knees and kowtowed in worship.

"Please go back now, superior sage," they pleaded. "We are now going to the prefectural offices to request His Honour to release them immediately. We implore you not to move your feet and terrify us to death." Only then did Monkey put away that magical body, turn into a midge again and fly back into the gaol through a gap between the tiles at the eaves, climb into his rack and go to sleep.

The story now tells that no sooner had the prefect entered his courtroom and ordered the notice inviting people to submit written requests to be carried outside than Kou Liang and his brother fell to their knees at the entrance, holding the notice in their arms. The prefect ordered them to come in, and when the prefect read the document that the two of them submitted he said in fury, "Yesterday you handed me a wanted notice. The thieves were arrested and you had the booty back. So why are you asking for them to be released today?"

"Your Honour," the two brothers replied, tears streaming down, "last night our father's spirit appeared to us and said 'the holy monks from Tang captured the bandits, took our property back from them, released them and were kindly bringing the goods back to us to show their gratitude. How could you have treated them as robbers, captured them and made them suffer in gaol? The local god in the gaol and the city god were so alarmed and uneasy that they reported it to King Yama. King Yama ordered demons to escort me back to tell you to go to the prefectural court and submit another plea for the Tang Priest's release and thus avoid disaster.

Otherwise everybody in the household would be killed.' This is why we have come with this request for their release. We beg you to help us, Your Honour."

On hearing this the prefect thought, "Their father is a new ghost whose body is still warm, so it's not surprising that he should have appeared to them after what happened. But my uncle has been dead for five or six years. Why did he appear to me early this morning and tell me to investigate and release them? It really does look as though an injustice has been done."

As the prefect was thinking things over the magistrate and other officials of Diling county came rushing into the courtroom to say in a wild panic, "Disaster, Your Honour, disaster! The Jade Emperor has just sent the Roving God Rambler down to earth to tell you to release those good men from gaol this very moment. The monks captured yesterday weren't robbers: they are disciples of the Buddha going to fetch the scriptures. If there's any delay he's going to kick all us officials to death, then trample the whole city and all the people in it to dust and ashes." The prefect turned pale at this new shock, then told the head gaoler to write a release order and deliver them to the court. The prison doors were immediately opened and they were led out.

"Goodness knows what sort of beating we're in for today," said Pig gloomily.

"I can guarantee that they won't dare give you a single clout," said Monkey with a grin. "I've fixed everything up. When you go into the courtroom you absolutely mustn't kneel. He'll come down into the court to invite us to take the best seats. Then we'll ask for our luggage and the horse back from him. If anything's missing I'll give him a beating for your entertainment."

Before he had finished speaking they reached the entrance to the courtroom, where the prefect, the county magistrate and all the other officials came out to welcome them with the words, "When you holy monks arrived yesterday we were under urgent pressure to meet our superiors. In addition, we did see the stolen goods. That is why we did not find out the truth." The Tang Priest put his hands together in front of his chest, bowed and recounted in detail everything that had happened.

Chapter 97

1360

Journey to the West

The officials were all voluble in admitting, "We were wrong, we were wrong. Please, please don't be angry with us."

They then asked if the monks had lost anything in the prison. Monkey stepped forward, opened his eyes wide in a glare and yelled at the top of his voice, "Our white horse was taken by the court officers, and the gaolers took our luggage. Give it back right now. It's our turn to torture and question you lot how. What should the punishment for wrongfully arresting innocent people as bandits be?"

Seeing how ugly he was acting, the prefectural and county officials were all terrified. They told the people who had taken the horse to return the horse, and the men who had taken the luggage to return every single piece of it. Just look at how viciously the three disciples start acting, while the officials could only blame the Kou family to cover up their own blunder.

"Disciples," said Sanzang, trying to calm them down. "Let us go to the Kou house to question them and argue it out with them in order to make everything clear. Then we can find out who it was who took us for robbers."

"Good idea," said Brother Monkey. "I'll call the dead man back and ask him who killed him."

Friar Sand hoisted the Tang Priest up on the horse right there in the courtroom, then escorted him outside with much shouting. All the prefectural and county officials accompanied them to the Kou house, so alarming Kou Liang and his brother that they kowtowed repeatedly in front of the gateway then led them into the hall. This was where old Mr. Kou's coffin lay, and the whole family was to be seen weeping

inside the mourning drapes around it.

"Stop howling, you lying old woman," Monkey shouted. "You tried to get innocent men killed. Wait till I call your husband back. We'll see what he has to say about who murdered him. That'll shame her." The officials all thought that Monkey was joking, but then he said, "Please keep my master company for a moment, Your Honors, Pig, Friar Sand, protect him well. I'm off. I'll soon be back."

The splendid Great Sage bounded outside and rose up into the sky.

Coloured clouds were all around to cover up the house.

Auspicious auras filled the sky to protect the primal deity.

Only then did everyone recognize that Monkey was an immortal who could ride clouds and mists, and a sage who could bring the dead back to life. We will not tell of how they all burned incense and worshipped.

The Great Sage went straight to the Underworld by somersault cloud and charged into the Senluo Palace, causing such alarm that:

The Ten Kings of the Underworld came out to raise their bands in greeting; The demon judges of the five regions kowtowed in welcome.

Chapter 97

1361

Journey to the West

A thousand trees of knives all leaned away;

Ten thousand hills of swords all leveled themselves.

In the City of the Unjustly Slain the fiends were converted;

Under the bridge over Punishment River the dead return to life.

The divine light was like the grace of Heaven,

And everywhere shone bright in the palaces of darkness.

The Ten Kings received the Great Sage, greeted him, and asked him why he had come. "Who's got the ghost of Kou Hong who used to feed monks in Diling County in the prefecture of Brazentower?" said Monkey.

"Find him and give him to me at once."

"Kou Hong is a very good man," the Ten King replied. "He came here himself. No demon had to envoys drag him here with their hooks. He met King Ksitigarbha's Goldenclad Boy, who took him to see Ksitigarbha."

Monkey then took his leave of them and went straight to the Turquoise Cloud Palace, where he saw the Bodhisattva King Ksitigarbha. When the Bodhisattva had greeted him Monkey explained what had happened.

"Liang Hong's allotted span had been completed," the Bodhisattva said with delight, "and his life was over.

That is why he left the world behind and came here without touching his bed. As he was such a good man who had fed monks I have made him a chief recorder in charge of the register of good deeds. But since you have come here to fetch him, Great Sage, I shall grant him a twelve–year extension of his life on earth. Let him leave with the Great Sage."

The Goldenclad Boy then led out Kou Hong, who on seeing Monkey kept saying, "Teacher, save me!

Teacher!"

"You were kicked to death by robbers," said Monkey, "and now you're in the Bodhisattva King Ksitigarbha's place in the Under world. I've come to fetch you and take you to the world of the living to sort this matter out.

The Bodhisattva will let you go back and has given you another twelve years of life, after which you'll come back here." The old gentleman kowtowed to him endlessly.

Having thanked and taken his leave of the Bodhisattva, Monkey blew on Kou Hong, turned him into vapor, tucked him into his sleeve and

left the Underworld to go back to the world of the living. He rode his cloud back to the Kou house, told Pig to lever the lid off the coffin and pushed Kou Hong's spirit back into the body.

A moment later Kou Hong started breathing as he came back to life. Climbing out of his coffin, he kowtowed to the Tang Priest and his three disciples with the words, "Teachers, teachers, I was wrongly killed, but my master went to the Underworld to bring me back to life. I owe him my recovery."

His thanks were unending. When he turned round and saw all the officials drawn up in line he kowtowed again and asked, "Why are all your lordships in my house?"

"Your sons first submitted a wanted notice," the prefect replied, "and accused the holy monks by name. I sent men to arrest them, not realizing that the holy monks had met the robbers who raided your house, taken the booty off them and were returning it to your house. I was wrong to have them arrested, and I had them thrown Chapter 97

into gaol without making a detailed investigation. Last night your spirit appeared, my late uncle came to lodge a complaint with me, and the Roving God Rambler came down to earth in the county offices. After so many manifestations I released the holy monks, and they have brought you back to life."

"Your Honour," said Mr. Kou on his knees, "these four holy monks really have been wronged. That night over thirty bandits with torches and weapons robbed my house. Because I could not bear to lose all those things I tried to reason with the robbers, but to my horror they kicked me to death. What's it got to do with these four gentlemen?"

He then called for his wife. "Why did you people make that lying report about who had killed me? Will you please determine their punishments, Your Honour." Everyone in the family, young and old alike, kowtowed.

In his magnanimity the prefect spared them from punishment. Kou Hong then ordered a banquet to thank the prefectural and county officials for their generosity. The officials all returned to their offices without sitting down at the banquet. The next day the sign announcing that monks would be fed was hung out again, and another

attempt was made to keep Sanzang there. Sanzang refused absolutely to stay any longer. Once again Mr. Kou invited his friends and relations, arranged for flags and canopies and saw them off as before. Indeed: However remote the place evil deeds can be done;

Heaven may be high, but it does not desert the good.

Steadily they plod along towards the Tathagata

Until they reach the gate of bliss on Vulture Peak.

If you do not know what happened when they met the Buddha, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 98

When the Ape and the Horse Are Tamed They Cast Off Their Husks
When All the Deeds Have Been Done Reality Is Seen

The story told how after coming back to life Mr. Kou once more arranged for parasols, banners, drummers, musicians, Buddhist monks, Taoist priests, his friends and his relations to see Sanzang off again. But instead of describing this we will tell of the Tang Priest and his three disciples taking the main road. The West was indeed a land of the Buddha, unlike anywhere else. They saw precious flowers, rare grasses, ancient cypresses and hoary pines. In all the places they passed through every family was pious and fed monks. Under every mountain people cultivated their conduct; in all the forests travelers recited sutras Master and disciples took shelter each night and set out at dawn, till six or seven days later a mass of high buildings and splendid halls suddenly came into view. Truly they were:

Thrusting a hundred feet into the heavens,

Touching the Milky Way in the sky.

Lower your head and see the setting sun;

Put out your hand and pluck a shooting star.

The spacious windows enclose the cosmos;

The towering roofbeams join up with the clouds.

Yellow cranes bring letters as the autumn trees grow old;

Coloured phoenix epistles come in the fresh evening breeze.

These are sacred and precious palaces and gates,

Jeweled, intricate buildings and courtyards.

In the holy halls the Way is discussed;

Sutras are transmitted throughout the universe.

The flowers are beautiful as they turn towards the spring;

Green are the pine trees in the rain.

Purple fungus and immortals' fruits ever flourish;

All beings respond as red phoenixes soar.

Sanzang raised his whip and pointed with it as he said, "What a fine place, Wukong."

"Master," said Monkey, "when you were in those delusive places where you saw false images of Buddhas you insisted on prostrating yourself in front of them. But today, when you've reached the real place where there is the true image of the Buddha, you won't even dismount. What do you mean by it?" No sooner did he hear this than Sanzang sprang straight out of the saddle and went to the gateway.

A young lay brother who stood to one side of the monastery gateway called out, "You must be the people from the East who have come to fetch the scriptures." The venerable elder quickly straightened his clothes and raised his head to look around. He saw that the boy was

Wearing clothes of golden brocade,

Waving a jade—handled whisk.

Wearing clothes of golden brocade

He feasted in pavilions by the Jasper Pool;

Waving a jade–handled whisk

He dusted the steps of the purple palaces.

At his side hung an immortal's tablet;

And on his feet were sandals.

He was a true winged adept,

Elegant and remarkable.

Having won immortality he lived in a wonderful land,

Cultivating eternal life and escaping from worldly dust.

The holy priest did not recognize the stranger on Vulture Peak, The Gold–crested Immortal of yesteryear.

The Great Sage Monkey did, however, recognize him. "Master," said Monkey, "this is the Great Gold–crested Immortal who lives at the Jade Truth Temple at the foot of Vulture Peak. He is here to greet us." Only then did Sanzang realize who he was and step forward to salute him.

"You have finally arrived here this year," replied the Great Immortal with a smile. "I was fooled by the Bodhisattva Guanyin. Ten years ago she went to the East at the Buddha's command to find the Pilgrim who would fetch the scriptures. She told me then he would be here within two or three years. I have been waiting for years on end with no news of you at all. I never thought that it would be this year before we met."

Putting his hands together in front of his chest, Sanzang replied, "I am very grateful to you for your kindness, Great Immortal, very grateful." Sanzang and his three disciples led the horse and carried the baggage with them into the Taoist temple, where they were introduced to all the Great Immortals there. Tea and a vegetarian meal were then ordered, and the Taoist boys were told to heat scented water for the holy monks to bathe in before climbing to the Buddha land. Indeed:

When achievements are complete it is right to bathe;

The fundamental nature has been trained into innate truth.

Many thousand troubles and today:

The nine prohibitions and triple surrender lead to renewal.

The monsters all done with, they climb to the Buddha land;

Chapter 98

1365

Journey to the West

With disasters ended they see the Sramana.

Dirt and filth now washed away, they are wholly pure;

Returning to the fundamental, their bodies are imperishable.

By the time master and disciples had bathed the day was drawing to a close. They spent the night in the Jade Truth Temple.

The next morning the Tang Priest changed into his brocade cassock, put on his Vairocana mitre and grasped his monastic staff in his hand to climb the steps of the main hall and take his leave of the Great Immortal.

"Yesterday you were in rags," the Great Immortal said with a smile, "but today you are dressed in splendor. I can see from your appearance that you are indeed a son of the Buddha." Sanzang then bowed in farewell.

"Wait a moment," the Great Immortal said. "I will see you off."

"There's no need for you to see us off," Monkey replied. "I know the way."

"What you know," said the Great Immortal, "is the way by cloud. The holy monk has never gone by cloud. He must go by the overland way."

"You're right," replied Monkey. "Although I've been here several times I've always come and gone by cloud.

I've never come here on foot. If there's an overland route I'll trouble you to see us along it. My master is very serious about worshipping the Buddha, so I'd be very grateful if you could hurry up about it." The

Great Immortal chuckled as he took the Tang Priest by hand and led the Incense to the gate of the Dharma. The way led not out by the temple's front entrance but through the main hall and out through the back gate.

Pointing towards Vulture Peak, the Great Immortal said, "Holy monk, do you see the auspicious light of many colours and the richly textured aura in the sky? That is the summit of Vulture Peak, the holy territory of the Lord Buddha." As soon as he saw it the Tang Priest bowed low.

"Master," said Brother Monkey with a smile, "we haven't got to the place for bowing yet. As the saying goes,

'The mountain may be in view, but your horse will collapse before you get there.' We're still quite a long way from the place, so why start bowing now? If you bow all the way from here to the top, however many times will you have to hit your head on the ground?"

"Holy monk," said the Great Immortal, "You, the Great Sage, Marshal Tian Peng, and the Curtain–raising General have now reached the blessed land and seen Vulture Peak. I am going back now." Sanzang took his leave of the Great Immortal and continued on his way.

The Great Sage led the Tang Priest and the others slowly up Vulture Peak. Within a couple of miles they reached a river of mighty rolling waves some three miles wide. There was no sign of anyone anywhere around.

"Wukong," said Sanzang with alarm, "we have come the wrong way. I wonder if the Great Immortal misdirected us. This river is so wide and the waves so big, and there are no boats to be seen. How are we to cross it?"

"He didn't send us the wrong way," replied Monkey with a smile. "Look over there. That's a bridge, isn't it?

Once we're over that we'll have completed the true achievement." When the venerable elder and the others went closer to look they saw a tablet beside it on which were written the words CLOUDTOUCHING

CROSSING. Now this bridge was only a single log. Indeed:

From afar it seemed to span the void like a beam of jade;

Seen closer, the bridge was but a withered spar crossing the water.

To bind a river and frame the sea is easier

Than walking along the trunk of a single tree.

The glow of a myriad rainbows spread out all around;

A thousand lengths of fine white silk stretched to the edge of the sky.

It was narrow, slippery and hard to cross,

Unless one was a god who could walk on coloured clouds.

"Wukong," said Sanzang in fear and trembling, "no mortal man could cross that bridge. Let us look elsewhere to find the way."

"But this is the way," replied Monkey with a smile, "this is the way."

"Nobody's going to dare cross that even if it is the right way," said Pig with alarm. "The river's so wide, and there are those terrible waves, and all there is is that narrow, slippery tree－trunk. We couldn't take a single step."

"You all stand there while I go on it to show you," replied Monkey.

The splendid Great Sage strode forward and sprang on the single －trunk bridge. He quickly ran across to the other side, swaying as he went, and called out, "Come over, come over." The Tang Priest waved in refusal, while Pig and Friar Sand bit their fingers and said, "It's much too hard."

Monkey then ran back again from the far side and pulled at Pig. "Come with me, you idiot," he said, "come with me."

"It's too slippery, it's too slippery," said Pig, lying down on the ground. "I could never cross it. Please spare me that and let me cross by wind and mist."

Monkey held him down as he replied, "This is no place for you to be allowed to go riding wind and mist. You can only become a Buddha by crossing this bridge."

"Brother," said Pig, "I'll never make it. Honestly, I can't walk across."

Chapter 98

1367

Journey to the West

As the two of them were pulling at each other and fighting, Friar Sand went over to talk them round. Only then did they let go of each other. Sanzang then looked round to see a man poling a boat towards them from downriver and shouting, "Ferry! Come aboard."

"Stop fooling around, disciples," said a delighted venerable elder. "There is a ferry – boat coming." The other three sprang to their feet and all watched together as the boat drew closer. It was a bottomless craft.

Monkey had already spotted with the golden pupils in his fiery eyes that this was the Welcoming Lord Buddha, who is also known as Ratnadhvaja, the Royal Buddha of Brightness, but instead of giving this away he just kept calling, "Over here, punt, over here."

A moment later the ferryman had punted his boat up to the bank and was again shouting, "Ferry! Come aboard!" Sanzang was once more alarmed at the sight. "Your boat has no bottom," he said, "so however could you ferry anyone across?"

"This boat of mine," the Buddha said,

"Has been famous since Chaos was first divided,

And been punted by me without any changes.

It is stable in wind and stable in waves,

Enjoying great peace with no start and no end.

Untouched by the six types of dust, it returns to the One,

Carries on calmly through all kinds of calamity.

Hard it is for a bottomless boat to cross the oceans,

But since ancient times it has ferried all creatures."

The Great Sage Monkey put his hands together in front of his chest

and thanked him with the words, "I am grateful to you for your generosity in coming to welcome my master. Step aboard, Master. That boat of his may have no bottom, but it's stable, and won't capsize even in wind and waves." The venerable elder was still very doubtful, but Monkey seized him by the arms and pushed him forward. Unable to keep on his feet, the master tumbled into the water, where the ferryman grabbed hold of him at once and stood him on the boat.

The master shook his clothes and stamped his feet, complaining about Monkey, who led Friar Sand and Pig to stand on board bringing the luggage and the horse with them.

Gently and strongly the Buddha pushed off, at which a corpse came floating downstream, to the horror of the venerable elder. "Don't be frightened, Master," said Monkey. "That's you."

"It's you, it's you," said Pig. Friar Sand clapped his hands as he said, "It's you, it's you!"

Chapter 98

1368

Journey to the West

The boatman gave a call, then also put in, too, "It's you! Congratulations! Congratulations!" The three of them all joined in these congratulations as the ferryman punted the boat quickly and steadily over the immortal Cloud – touching Crossing. Sanzang turned around and sprang lightly ashore on the opposite bank. There is a poem about this that goes:

When the womb – born flesh and body of blood is cast aside,

The primal spirit finds kinship and love.

On this morning of actions completed and Buddhahood attained

The thirty – six kinds of dust from the past are washed away.

This was indeed what is meant by great wisdom, the boundless dharma of crossing to the other bank. When the four of them climbed the bank and looked back the bottomless boat had already disappeared, goodness knew where. Only when Brother Monkey explained that it had been the Welcoming Buddha did Sanzang find enlightenment At once he turned round to thank his three disciples.

"Let's not exchange thanks," said Monkey. "We've helped each other. You saved us three, Master, and showed us the way to win merit so as to complete the true achievement. And we have protected you, Master, holding to the faith and helping you happily to cast off your mortal body. Master, look at the magnificent scenery ahead. Flowers, grasses, pines and bamboo, as well as phoenixes, cranes and deer. Compare it with those places where evil beings created illusions through transformation. Ask yourself which is beautiful and good, and which ugly and evil." Sanzang was full of expressions of gratitude. All of them were now light of body and cheerful as they walked up Vulture Peak. Soon the ancient Thunder Monastery could be seen: Its rooftops touched the heavens,

Its roots joined with the Sumeru range.

Amazing peaks spread out in serried rank;

Craggy rocks formed interlocking shapes.

Under the hanging scar were wonderful plants and flowers;

Beside the winding path grew magic mushrooms and orchids.

Immortal apes were picking the fruit of the peach trees,

Like gold amid burning flames;

White cranes perched in the branches of the pines

As if they were jade creatures amid smoke.

Chapter 98

1369

Journey to the West

Coloured phoenixes in pairs,

Green phoenixes two by two.

The pairs of coloured phoenixes

Brought blessings on the world as they called to the sun;

The green phoenixes two by two

Danced in the wind, a rare and wonderful sight.

On the gleaming golden tiles were figures of mandarin ducks;

The brilliantly patterned bricks were set with agate.

To East and West

Were flowers of palaces and pearls of gateways;

To North and South

Were endless precious pavilions and high buildings.

The Devaraja Hall streamed with coloured light;

Purple flames rose before the Lokapalas Chamber.

Stupas stood out,

And fragrant were the blossoms of the udumbara tree.

Truly this was a place so fine it might have come from heaven, Where the days seemed long under leisurely clouds.

Away from the mortal world, all fates came to an end;

All kalpas were complete within the Dharma hall.

As master and disciples walked freely and at their ease up to the summit of Vulture Peak lay people could be seen under the green pines, and pious men and women amid the jade—coloured cypresses. The venerable elder bowed to them politely, whereupon all the lay men and women, monks and nuns all hastened to put their hands together and say to him, "Do not bow to us, holy monk. Come back and talk with us when you have seen Sakyamuni."

"It's a bit early for that," replied Monkey with a grin. "Let's go and worship the boss."

Chapter 98

1370

Journey to the West

The venerable elder waved his arms and performed a ritual dance as

he followed Monkey straight to the gates of the Thunder Monastery, where four great vajrapanis greeted them with the words, "Have you arrived now, holy monk?"

"Yes," Sanzang replied with a bow, "Your disciple Xuanzang has arrived." Having given this reply he was about to go in through the gateway.

"Please wait for a moment, holy monk," the vajrapanis said. "Let us report before you come in." The vajrapanis sent a report of the Tang Priest's arrival to the four great vajrapanis on the middle gates, who in turn reported it to the inner gates, inside which were divine monks making offerings.

As soon as they heard of the Tang Priest's arrival they all hurried to the Mahavira Hall, where they announced to the Tathagata Sakyamuni Buddha, "The holy monk from the Tang Court has arrived at your noble monastery to fetch the scriptures."

The Lord Buddha was very pleased. He called together his Eight Bodhisattvas, Four Vajrapanis, Five Hundred Arhats, Three Thousand Protectors, Eleven Heavenly Shiners and Eighteen Guardians, who drew themselves up in two lines and passed on the Buddha's command summoning the Tang Priest to enter. Thus it was that the invitation was sent down from one level to the next: "Let the holy monk come in." Observing the requirements of ritual, the Tang Priest went in through the gate with Wukong and Wujing, who were leading the horse and carrying the luggage. Indeed:

In the past he had struggled to fulfil his commission

After leaving the emperor at the steps of the throne.

At dawn he had climbed mountains in mist and in dew;

At dusk he had slept on rocks amid the clouds.

He had carried his stick across three thousand rivers,

And climbed up countless crags with his monastic staff.

His every thought had been set on the true achievement,

And today he was finally to see the Tathagata.

As the four of them arrived in front of the Mahavira Hall they all

prostrated themselves and kowtowed to the Tathagata, then to their left and right. After they had each completed three rounds of Worship they then knelt before the Buddha to present their passport. When the Tathagata had read it carefully he handed it back to Sanzang, who bowed his head low and reported, "Your disciple Xuanzang has made the long journey to your precious monastery at the command of the Great Tang emperor to beg for the true scriptures that will save all living beings. I implore the Lord Buddha in his goodness to grant them at once so that I may return to my country."

Chapter 98

1371

Journey to the West

The Tathagata then opened his compassionate mouth and in the great mercy of his heart said to Sanzang,

"Your Eastern land is in the Southern Continent of Jambu. As the sky is lofty there, the soil deep, its products many, and the people multitudinous there is much covetous—ness, murder, debauchery, lying, deception and dishonesty. They do not follow the Buddhist teaching, do not turn towards good destinies, and do not honour the sun, moon and stars or value the five grains. They are not loyal, filial, righteous or kind. In the delusion of their hearts they mislead themselves, cheating on weights and measures, taking life and killing animals, thus creating such boundless evil karma and such a superabundance of sin and evil that they bring the catastrophe of hell on themselves. That is why they must fall for ever into the dark underworld to suffer the torments of being hammered, smashed, ground and pounded, or are reborn as animals. Many of them take the shape of furry, horned creatures to pay back the debts they owe from earlier lives and feed others with their own flesh.

It is for such reasons that some fall into the Avici Hell, from which they never emerge to be reborn. Although Confucius established the doctrine of benevolence, righteousness, correct behavior and wisdom, and although successive emperors have applied the penalties of imprisonment, exile strangulation and beheading, none of this affected those stupid, benighted, self—indulgent and unrestrained people. Why? I have Three Stores of scriptures that offer deliverance from suffering and release from disaster. Of these Three Stores one is the Store of Dharma that deals with Heaven; one is the Store of Sastras that deal with the Earth, and one is the Store of Sutras that can save

ghosts. There are thirty–five scriptures altogether, in 15,144 scrolls. These are indeed the path to the truth, the gateway to goodness. They include everything about the astronomy, geography, personalities, birds beasts trees, flowers, objects of use and human affairs of the world's four continents. Now that you have come from afar I would present them all to you to take away with you, but the people of your country are stupid and coarse. They are slanderers of the truth who cannot understand the mysteries of our teachings. Ananda, Kasyapa," he called, "take the four of them to the foot of the jewel tower and give them a vegetarian meal. After the meal open up the pavilion, select a few rolls from each of the thirty–five scriptures in my Three Stores, and tell them to propagate these scriptures in the East, where they may eternally grant their great goodness."

Acting on the orders of the Buddha the two arhats then led the four pilgrims to the bottom of the tower, where no end of rare and wonderful jewels and treasures were set out. Here the divinities who made offerings set out a vegetarian banquet, with immortal food, immortal delicacies, immortal tea, immortal fruit, and every kind of culinary delight not to be found in the mortal world. Master and disciples bowed their heads to the ground in thanks for the Buddha's kindness and proceeded to eat to their hearts' content. Indeed Precious flames and golden light dazzled the eye,

While the rare incense and delicacies were marvelously fine.

The thousand–storied golden pavilion was infinitely lovely,

And pure sounded immortals' music on the ear.

Meatless food and magic flowers of the sort that are rare on earth,
Fragrant teas and exotic dishes that give eternal life.

After a long period of enduring a thousand kinds of suffering, Today comes the glorious happiness of the Way completed.

Chapter 98

1372

Journey to the West

This was a piece of good fortune for Pig, and a great, benefit to Friar Sand as they ate their fill of the food in the Buddha's land that gave eternal life and new flesh and bones for old. The two arhats kept the four of them company till the meal was over, after which they went to

the treasure pavilion, where the doors were opened for them to go in and look. Over this all was a thousandfold aura of coloured light and auspicious vapors, while brilliant mists and clouds of good omen wafted all around. All over the scripture shelves and on the outside of the cases were pasted red labels on which were neatly written the titles of the scriptures. They were the

Nirvana sutra 748 rolls

Bodhisattva sutra 1,021 rolls

Akasagarbha sutra 400 rolls

Surangama sutra 110 rolls

Collection of sutras on the meaning of grace 50 rolls

Determination sutra 140 rolls

Ratnagarbha sutra 45 rolls

Avatamsaka sutra 500 rolls

Sutra on Worshipping Bhutatathata 90 rolls

Mahaprajnaparamita sutra 916 rolls

Mahaprabhasa sutra 300 rolls

Adbhuta – dharma sutras 1,110 rolls

Vimalakirti sutra 170 rolls

The Three Sastras 270 rolls

Diamond sutra 100 rolls

Saddharma sastra 120 rolls

Buddhacaritakavya sutra 800 rolls

Pancanaga sutra 32 rolls

Bodhisattva – vinaya sutra 116 rolls

Mahasamnipata sutras 130 rolls

Makara sutra 350 rolls

Chapter 98

1373

Journey to the West

Saddharma – pundarika sutra 100 rolls

Yoga sutra 100 rolls

Precious Eternity sutra 220 rolls

Sutra on the Western Heaven 130 rolls

Samghika sutra 157 rolls

Samyukta – Buddhadesa sutra 1,950 rolls

Mahayana – sraddhotpadasa sutra 1,000 rolls

Great Wisdom sutra 1,080 rolls

Ratna – prabhava sutra 1,280 rolls

Original Pavilion sutra 850 rolls

Principal vinaya sutra 200 rolls

Ananda and Kasyapa led the Tang Priest to read the titles of all the scriptures.

"You have come here from the East, holy monk," they said to him. "Have you brought us any presents? Hand them over right now, then we can give you the scriptures."

When Sanzang heard this he said, "Your disciple Xuanzang has come a very long way, and I did not bring any with me."

"That's very fine," the two arhats said with a laugh. "If we hand the scriptures over for nothing, they'll be passed down through the ages and our successors will have to starve to death." Monkey could not stand hearing them talking tough like this and refusing to hand the scriptures over, so he shouted, "Let's go and report them to the Tathagata, Master. We'll get him to give me the scriptures himself."

"Shut up!" said Kasyapa. "Where do you think you are, acting up like this? Come here and take the scriptures." Pig and Friar Sand, who

were keeping their own tempers under control, calmed Monkey down.

They turned back to accept the scriptures, which were packed one by one into the luggage. Some of it was put on the horse's back, and the rest tied up as two carrying–pole loads that Pig and Friar Sand shouldered. They all then returned to the Buddha's throne, kowtowed, thanked the Tathagata and went straight out. They bowed twice to every Buddha and every Bodhisattva they met. When they reached the main entrance they bowed to the bhiksus, the bhiksunis, the laymen and the laywomen, taking their leave of each one. Then they hurried back down the mountain.

The story tells not of them but of the Ancient Buddha Dipamkara, who had been quietly listening in the library when the scriptures were handed over. He understood perfectly well that Ananda and Kasyapa had handed over wordless scriptures. "Those stupid monks from the East didn't realize that those were wordless scriptures," he thought with a smile to himself. "The holy monks journey across all those mountains and rivers will be a complete waste. Who is in attendance here?" he called, and the arhat Suklavira stepped forward.

Chapter 98

1374

Journey to the West

"Use your divine might," Dipamkara instructed him, "and go after the Tang Priest like a shooting star. Take the wordless scriptures from him and tell him to come back to fetch the true scriptures." The arhat Suklavira then flew off on a storm wind that roared away from the Thunder Monastery as he gave a great display of his divine might. That splendid wind really was

A warrior from the Buddha's presence,

Greater than the two wind gods of the Xun quarter.

The angry roars from his divine orifices

Were more powerful by far than the puffs of a young girl.

This wind made

Fish and dragons lose their dens,

While the waves flowed backwards in rivers and seas.

Black apes could not present the fruit they carried;

Yellow cranes turned back to the clouds as they sought their nests.

Ugly rang the song of the red phoenix;

Raucous were the calls of the multicolored pheasants.

The branches of hoary pines were broken

As the flowers of the udumbara blew away.

Every cane of green bamboo bowed low;

All the blooms of golden lotus swayed.

The sound of the bell was carried a thousand miles

While the chanting of sutras flew lightly up the ravines.

Ruined was the beauty of flowers under the crag;

The tender shoots of plants were laid low by the path

The brilliant phoenixes could hardly spread their wings;

White deer hid beneath the cliffs.

The heavens were heavy with fragrance

Chapter 98

1375

Journey to the West

As the clear wind blew right through the clouds.

The Tang Priest was walking along when he smelt the fragrant wind, but he paid no attention to it, taking it for an auspicious sign of the Lord Buddha. Then a noise could be heard as a hand reached down from midair to lift the scriptures lightly off the horse's back, which gave Sanzang such a shock that he beat his chest and howled aloud. Pig scrambled along in pursuit, Friar Sand guarded the carrying −poles loaded with scriptures, and Brother Monkey flew after the arhat. Seeing that Monkey had almost caught up with him, and

frightened that the merciless cudgel would make no bones about wounding him badly, the arhat tore the bundle of scriptures to shreds and flung it into the dust. When Monkey saw the bundle falling in pieces that were being scattered by the fragrant wind he stopped chasing the arhat and brought his cloud down to look after the scriptures. The arhat Suklavira put the wind and the clouds away, then went back to report to Dipamkara.

When Pig, who was also in pursuit, saw the scriptures falling he helped Monkey to collect them up and carry them back to the Tang Priest. "Disciples," the Tang Priest exclaimed, tears pouring from his eyes, "even in this world of bliss evil demons cheat people." After gathering up the scattered scriptures in his arms Friar Sand opened one of them up and saw that it was as white as snow: not a word was written on it.

Quickly he handed it to Sanzang with the remark, "There's nothing in this scroll, Master." Monkey opened out another scroll to find that it had nothing written in it either. Pig opened another and it too had nothing in it.

"Open them all for us to examine," said Sanzang. Every single scroll was blank paper.

"We Easterners really do have no luck," he said, sighing and groaning. "What point is there in fetching wordless scriptures like these? How could I ever face the Tang emperor? I will have no way of avoiding execution for the crime of lying to my sovereign."

Monkey, who already understood what had happened, then said to the Tang Priest, "Say no more, Master.

Ananda and Kasyapa gave us these scrolls of blank paper because we hadn't got any presents to give them when they asked for them. Let's go back, report them to the Tathagata and get them accused of extortion."

"That's right," shouted Pig, "that's right. Let's report them." The four of them then hurried up the mountain again, and after a few steps they were rushing back to the Thunder Monastery.

Before long they were once more outside the gates of the monastery, where everyone raised their clasped hands in greeting. "Have you holy monks come to exchange your scriptures?" they asked with smiles.

Sanzang nodded and expressed his thanks. The vajrapanis did not

block them, but let them go straight in to the Mahavira Hall.

"Tathagata," yelled Monkey, "our master and the rest of us have had to put up with endless monsters, demons, troubles and hardships to get here from the East to worship you. You gave the orders for the scriptures to be handed over, but Ananda and Kasyapa didn't do so because they were trying to extort things from us. They conspired and deliberately let us take away blank paper versions without a single word written on them. But what's the point in taking those? I beg you to have them punished, Tathagata."

"Stop yelling," replied the Lord Buddha with a smile. "I already know that they asked you for presents. But the scriptures cannot be casually passed on. Nor can they be taken away for nothing. In the past bhiksus and holy monks went down the mountain and recited these scriptures to the family of the elder Zhao in the land of Chapter 98

Sravasti. This ensured peace and safety for the living and deliverance for the dead members of the family. All that was asked for was three bushels and three pecks of granular gold. I said they had sold the scriptures too cheap, so I saw to it that Zhao's sons and grandsons would be poor. You were given blank texts because you came here to fetch them empty－handed. The blank texts are true, wordless scriptures, and they really are good. But as you living beings in the East are so deluded and have not achieved enlightenment we'll have to give you these ones instead. Ananda, Kasyapa," he called, "fetch the true scriptures with words at once.

Choose a few rolls from each title to give them, then come back here and tell me how many."

The two arhats then led the four pilgrims to the foot of the library building and once again asked the Tang Priest for a present. Having nothing else to offer, he ordered friar Sand to bring out the begging bowl of purple gold and presented it with both hands. "Your disciple is poor and has come a very long way," he said, "and I did not bring any presents with me. This bowl was given to me by the Tang emperor with his own hands to beg for food with on my journey. I now offer it to you as a token of my heartfelt feelings. I beg you arhats not to despise it but to keep it. When I return to my court I shall report this to the Tang emperor, who will certainly reward you richly. I only ask

you to give me the true scriptures that have words to save me from failing in my imperial mission and making this long, hard journey for nothing."

Ananda accepted the bowl with no more than a hint of a smile. The warriors guarding the precious library building, the kitchen staff responsible for the spices and the arhats in charge of the library rubbed each other's faces, patted each other's backs, flicked each other with their fingers and pulled faces.

"Disgraceful," they all said with grins, "disgraceful. Demanding presents from the pilgrims who've come to fetch the scriptures!" A moment later Ananda was frowning with embarrassment but still holding the bowl and not letting go. Only then did Kasyapa go into the library to check the scriptures through one by one and give them to Sanzang.

"Disciples," called Sanzang, "take a good look at them, not like last time." The three of them took the rolls and examined them one by one. All had words. 5,048 rolls were handed over, the total in a single store. They were neatly packed up and put on the horse, and those left over were made into a carrying – pole load for Pig to take. Friar Sand carried their own luggage, and as Brother Monkey led the horse the Tang Priest took his staff, pushed his Vairocana mitre into position, shook his brocade cassock, and went happily into the presence of the Tathagata. Indeed:

Sweet taste the True Scriptures of the Great Store,

Created fine and majestic by the Tathagata.

Remember what Xuanzang suffered to climb this mountain:

Ananda's greed was something ridiculous.

What they did not notice at first Dipamkara helped them to see; Later the scriptures were real and they then found peace.

Successful now, they would take the scriptures to the East;

Where all could be refreshed by their life – giving richness.

Chapter 98

Ananda and Kasyapa led the Tang Priest to see the Tathagata, who ascended his lotus throne and directed the two great arhats Dragon – queller and Tiger – subduer to strike the cloud – ringing stone chimes that summoned all the Three Thousand Buddhas, Three Thousand Protectors, Eight Vajrapanis, Four Bodhisattvas, Five Hundred Arhats, Eight Hundred Bhiksus, the host of laymen, bhiksunis, laywomen, and the greater and lesser honoured ones and holy monks of every cave, every heaven, the blessed lands and the magic mountains.

Those who were supposed to sit were asked to ascend their precious thrones, and those who were supposed to stand stood on either side. All of a sudden heavenly music rang out from afar and magical sounds wafted around. The air was full of countless beams of auspicious light and of aura upon aura as all the Buddhas gathered together to pay their respects to the Tathagata.

"How many rolls of scripture have you given them, Ananda and Kasyapa?" the Tathagata asked. "Please tell me the numbers one by one."

The two arhats then reported, "We are now handing over for the Tang court the Nirvana sutra – – 400 rolls

Bodhisattva sutra – – 360 rolls

Akasagarbha sutra – – 20 rolls

Surangama sutra – – 30 rolls

Collection of sutras on the meaning of grace – – 40 rolls

Determination sutra – – 40 rolls

Ratnagarbha sutra – – 20 rolls

Avatamsaka sutra – – 81 rolls

Sutra on Worshipping Bhutatathata – – 30 rolls

Mahaprajnaparamita sutra – – 600 rolls

Mahaprabhasa sutra – – 50 rolls

Adbhuta – dharma sutras – – 550 rolls

Vimalakirti sutra – –30 rolls

The Three Sastras – –42 rolls

Diamond sutra – –1 rolls

Saddharma sastra – –20 rolls

Chapter 98

1378

Journey to the West

Buddhacaritakavya sutra – –116 rolls

Pancanaga sutra – –20 rolls

Bodhisattva – vinaya sutra – –60 rolls

Mahasamnipata sutras – –30 rolls

Makara sutra – –140 rolls

Saddharma – pundarika sutra – –10 rolls

Yoga sutra – –30 rolls

Precious Eternity sutra – –170 rolls

Sutra on the Western Heaven – –30 rolls

Samghika sutra – –110 rolls

Samyukta – Buddhadesa sutra – –1,638 rolls

Mahayana – sraddhotpadasa sastra – –50 rolls

Great Wisdom sutra – –90 rolls

Ratna – prabhava sutra – –140 rolls

Original Pavilion sutra – –56 rolls

Principal vinaya sutra – –10 rolls

Mahamayuri – vidyarajni sutra – –14 rolls

Vynaptimatra – tasiddhi sastra – – 10 rolls

Abhidharma – kosa sastra – – 10 rolls

From the thirty – five scriptures in all of the stores we have selected 5,048 rolls to give to the holy monk. These will be kept and handed down in Tang. They have now all been packed neatly and put on the horse or made into carrying – pole loads. The pilgrims are only waiting to express their thanks."

Sanzang and his three followers then tethered the horse, put down the loads, joined their hands in front of their chests and bowed in worship.

"The achievement of these scriptures is immeasurable," the Tathagata said to the Tang Priest, "Although they are the source of foreknowledge and reflection for my school they are truly the origin of all Three Schools. If they reach your Southern Continent of Jambudvipa they must not be treated with disrespect when they are shown to all living beings. Nobody who has not bathed, avoided eating meat and observed the prohibitions Chapter 98

1379

Journey to the West

may open the rolls. Treasure them. Honour them. They include the esoteric mysteries of the way of immortality and wonderful methods for discovering all transformations." Kowtowing in thanks, Sanzang faith fully accepted these instructions and determined to carry them out, did three more circuits of homage round the Lord Buddha then with dutiful and sincere obedience accepted the scriptures and went out with them through the third of the monastery gates, where he thanked all the holy beings one by one again. Of him we will say no more.

After sending the Tang Priest on his way the Tathagata dissolved the assembly that had been called to pass on the scriptures. The Bodhisattva Guanyin then stepped forward from the side, put her hands together and submitted to the lord Buddha, "It has been fourteen years from the time when your disciple went to the East that year to find the man who would fetch the scriptures to his success today. That makes 5,040 days. May the World – honoured One allow the holy monks to go back East from the West within eight days, so as to complete the number of rolls in one store, and then your disciple may report his mission as completed."

"What you say is quite right," replied the Tathagata with delight. "You are permitted to report the completion of your mission." With that he instructed the Eight Vajrapanis, "You are to use your divine might to escort the holy monks back to the East, where they will hand the true scriptures over to be kept there. After escorting the holy monks back, you may return to the West. This must be done within eight days in order to match the number of rolls in one store. There must be no disobedience or delay." The vajrapanis caught up with the Tang Priest. "Come with us, scripture–fetchers," they called; and the Tang Priest and the others became light and strong as they floated up on clouds after the vajrapanis. Indeed: Nature revealed and mind made clear, they visited the Buddha;

Actions complete and all achieved, they flew aloft.

If you do not know how they passed on the scriptures after returning to the East, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 99

When the Nine Nines Are Complete the Demons Are All Destroyed

After the Triple Threes Are Fulfilled the Way Returns to Its Roots The story goes on to tell how the Eight Vajrapanis escorted the Tang Priest back to their country, but we will not go into that now.

Outside the gates the Protectors of the Four Quarters and the Centre, the Four Duty Gods, the Six Dings, the Six Jias and the Guardians of the Faith went up to the Bodhisattva Guanyin and said, "We, your disciples, have given secret help to the holy monk in obedience to your dharma command, Bodhisattva. Now that they have fulfilled their deeds and you have reported your mission accomplished to the Lord Buddha, we would like to report the completion of our mission."

"Permission granted." The Bodhisattva replied with delight, "permission granted." The Bodhisattva then went on to ask, "What were the thoughts and actions of the Tang Priest and his three disciples on their journey?"

"They really were pious and determined," the deities all replied, "as we

are sure will not have escaped your profound perception. But the Tang Priest's sufferings truly beggar description. Your disciples have made a careful record of the disasters and hardships that he has endured on his journey. This is the account of his ordeals." The Bodhisattva read it through from the beginning, and this is what was written in it:

"We Protectors were sent at the Bodhisattva's command,

To keep a close record of the Tang Priest's ordeals.

The Golden Cicada's exile was the first ordeal;

Being born and almost killed was the second ordeal;

Abandonment in the river under the full moon was the third ordeal; Finding his mother and getting revenge was the fourth ordeal;

The tigers he met after leaving the city were the fifth ordeal; Falling into the pit was the sixth ordeal;

The Double Forked Peak was the seventh ordeal;

The Double Boundary Mountain was the eighth ordeal;

Exchanging horses at the ravine was the ninth ordeal;

The fire at night was the tenth ordeal;

The loss of the cassock was the eleventh ordeal;

Subduing Pig was the twelfth ordeal;

The obstacles created by the Yellow Wind Monster were the thirteenth ordeal; Asking the help of Lingji was the fourteenth ordeal;

The hard crossing of the Flowing Sands River was the fifteenth ordeal; Winning over Friar Sand was the sixteenth ordeal;

The appearance of the four holy ones was the seventeenth ordeal; In the Wuzhuang Temple was the eighteenth ordeal;

The difficulty of reviving the manfruit was the nineteenth ordeal; The dismissal of the Mind—ape was the twentieth ordeal;

Getting lost in Black Pine Forest was the twenty – first ordeal; Delivering the letter to Elephantia was the twenty – second ordeal; To be turned into a tiger in the palace hall was the twenty – third ordeal; Meeting the monsters on Flat – top Mountain was the twenty – fourth ordeal; To hang in the Lotus Flower Cave was the twenty – fifth ordeal;

The rescue of the king of Wuji was the twenty – sixth ordeal;

The transformation by the demons was the twenty – seventh ordeal; The encounter with the monster of Mount Hao was the twenty – eighth ordeal; The holy monk being carried off by the wind was the twenty – ninth ordeal; The attack on the Mind – ape was the thirtieth ordeal;

Inviting the holy one to subdue the fiend was the thirty – first ordeal; Sinking in the Black River was the thirty – second ordeal;

The moving in Tarrycart was the thirty – third ordeal;

The enormous wager was the thirty – fourth ordeal;

Casting out the Taoists and promoting the Buddhists was the thirty – fifth ordeal; The great river met on the way was the thirty – sixth ordeal;

Falling into the River of Heaven was the thirty – seventh ordeal; The appearance with the fish basket was the thirty – eighth ordeal; Meeting the monster on Mount Jindou was the thirty – ninth ordeal; All the gods of heaven being unable to subdue him was the fortieth ordeal; Asking the Buddha about his origins was the forty – first ordeal; To be poisoned by drinking the water was the forty – second ordeal; Being kept in Womanland of Western Liang for the wedding was the forty – third ordeal; The agonies of the Pipa Cave were the forty – fourth ordeal;

The Mind – ape's second dismissal was the forty – fifth ordeal;

Telling the macaques apart was the forty – sixth ordeal;

Being held up by the Fiery Mountains was the forty－seventh ordeal; Obtaining the plantain－leaf fan was the forty－eighth ordeal;

Tying up the demon king was the forty－ninth ordeal;

Sweeping the pagoda in Jisai city was the fiftieth ordeal;

The recovery of the treasures and the rescue of the monks were the fifty－first ordeal; Reciting poems in the Thorn Forest was the fifty－second ordeal; Trouble in the Lesser Thunder Monastery was the fifty－third ordeal; The capture of the heavenly gods was the fifty－fourth ordeal;

Being stopped by the filthy Runny Persimmon Lane was the fifty－fifth ordeal; Healing in Purpuria was the fifty－sixth ordeal;

Saving from debility was the fifty－seventh ordeal;

Subduing fiends and rescuing the queen was the fifty－eighth ordeal; Delusion by the seven passions was the fifty－ninth ordeal;

The wounding of the Many－eyed Monster was the sixtieth ordeal; Being held up by the Lion was the sixty－first ordeal;

Dividing demons into three categories was the sixty－second ordeal; Meeting disaster in the city was the sixty－third ordeal;

Asking the Buddha to subdue the demon was the sixty－fourth ordeal; The rescue of the boys in Bhiksuland was the sixty－fifth ordeal; Telling the true from the evil was the sixty－sixth ordeal;

Saving the monster in the pine forest was the sixty－seventh ordeal; Lying sick in the monastic cell was the sixty－eighth ordeal;

Capture in the Bottomless Cave was the sixty－ninth ordeal;

Delays in Dharmadestructia were the seventieth ordeal;

Meeting the monster on Hidden Clouds Mountain was the seventy－first ordeal; Begging for rain in Fengxian was the seventy－second ordeal;

The loss of the weapons was the seventy – third ordeal;

The rake banquet was the seventy – fourth ordeal;

Troubles on Bamboo Mountain were the seventy – fifth ordeal;

Suffering in Dark Essence Cave was the seventy – sixth ordeal;

Catching Rhinoceros was the seventy – seventh ordeal;

Being required to marry in India was the seventy – eighth ordeal;
Imprisonment in Brazentower was the seventy – ninth ordeal;

Casting of the body at the Lingyun Crossing was the eightieth ordeal;
The journey was one of 36,000 miles,

And the ordeals of the holy monk are all clearly recorded."

Casting her eyes over the record, the Bodhisattva quickly said, "In the Buddha's school 'nine nines' are needed before one can come to the truth. The eighty ordeals that the holy monk has endured are one short of the full number. "Go after the vajrapanis," she ordered a protector, "and tell them to create another ordeal." The protector headed East by cloud as soon as he was given this order, and after a day and a night he caught up with the Eight Vajrapanis. "It's like this, you see," he said, whispering in their ears in explanation, adding, "so you must do as the Bodhisattva commands and not disobey." When the Eight Vajrapanis heard this they stopped the wind with a swishing sound and dropped the four of them to the ground, horse, scriptures and all.

Oh dear! It was a case of

The Way of reaching the truth through the nine nines is hard;

Hold fast to your determination to stand at the mysterious pass.

Only through rigorous effort can the demons be repelled;

Perseverance is essential to the true Dharma's return.

Do not mistake the scriptures for something easily won;

Of many a kind were the hardships endured by the holy monk.

The marvellous union has always been hard to achieve:

The slightest mistake and the elixir will not be made.

Chapter 99

1384

Journey to the West

As his feet touched common ground Sanzang felt alarmed. "Marvellous," said Pig, roaring with laughter, "just marvellous! It's a case of more haste less speed."

"It really is marvellous," said Friar Sand. "They're giving us a rest here after going so fast."

"As the saying goes," remarked the Great Sage, "'Wait ten days on a sandbank, then cross nine in a single day.'"

"Stop arguing, you three," said Sanzang. "Find out which way we have come and where we are."

"We're here!" said Friar Sand after looking all around, "We're here! Listen to the water, Master."

"From the sound of the water I suppose it must be your family home," observed Brother Monkey.

"His home is the River of Flowing Sands," said Pig.

"No, it's not that," replied Friar Sand. "It's the River of Heaven."

"Take a careful look at the other side, disciple," said Sanzang, at which Monkey sprang into the air, shaded his eyes with his hand, and took a careful look around. "Master," he said after coming down again, "this is the West bank of the River of Heaven."

"I remember now," said Sanzang. "On the East bank there is Chen Family Village. When we came here the other year they were so grateful to us for rescuing their son and daughter that they wanted to build a boat to take us across, but the White Soft—shelled Turtle carried us over. As I recall, there was no sign of human life anywhere on the West bank. Whatever are we to do now?"

"They say that common mortals can be sinners," said Pig, "but the vajrapanis who serve the Buddha in person are too. The Buddha

ordered them to bring us back East, so why have they dropped us half way home? We're stuck here now. How ever are we going to get over?"

"Stop complaining, brother," said Friar Sand. "Our master has found the Way. He cast off his mortal body at the Cloud–touching Crossing, so he won't possibly fall into the water now. Our big brother and we two can all do levitation magic, so we can carry the master across."

Monkey laughed to himself under his breath as he replied, "We can't do it, we can't do it." Why do you think he said that they couldn't do it? If he had been prepared to use his divine powers and give away the secret of flying then master and disciples would have been able to cross a thousand rivers. But he understood that as the Tang Priest had not yet completed the nine nines he was fated to undergo another ordeal, which was why he had been held up here.

Talking as they walked slowly along, master and disciples headed straight to the river–bank, where all of a sudden they heard someone calling, "This way, Tang Priest, this way!" They were all surprised, and when they looked up there was no sign of anyone around, and no boat either.

There was only a big, white, scabby–headed soft–shelled turtle raising its head by the bank and calling,

"Master, I have been waiting for you all these years. Why have you only just come back?"

"We troubled you in the past, old turtle," said Monkey with a smile, "and this year we meet again." Sanzang, Pig and Friar Sand were all delighted.

Chapter 99

1385

Journey to the West

"If you really do want to look after us, come ashore," Monkey said, at which the turtle climbed out of the river with a bound. Monkey had the horse tied to the turtle with Pig squatting behind the horse's tail. The Tang Priest stood to the left of the horse's neck and Friar Sand to its right, while Monkey stood with one foot on the turtle's neck and the other on his head.

"Take it easy and take it steady," he said. The turtle strode across the water just as if his four feet were walking on flat land, carrying the master and his three disciples, five of them altogether including the horse, straight back to the Eastern bank. This was Indeed:

The mystery of the Dharma within the unique sect:

When the demons are all defeated man and heaven are made known.

Only now can the original face be seen,

And the causes of the one body all be complete.

Hold to the Three Vehicles to come and go at will;

After the elixir's nine transformations you may do what you like.

Carry your bundle, let your staff fly, and understand the inexpressible;
Lucky they were on their return to meet the Ancient Turtle.

Carrying them on his back, the Ancient Soft－shelled Turtle walked across the waves for the best part of a day.

It was nearly evening when, as they approached the East bank, he suddenly asked, "Venerable master, some years ago I begged you when you reached the West and saw our Tathagata Buddha to ask him when I would be converted and how long I would live."

Now ever since the venerable elder had reached the Western Heaven, bathed in the Jade Truth Temple, cast off his mortal body at the Cloud －touching Crossing and walked up the Vulture Peak, his heart had been set only on worshipping the Buddha; and when he met all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, holy monks and others his whole mind had been devoted to fetching the scriptures. He had given no attention to anything else, and so had not asked about how long the Ancient Turtle would live. Having nothing he could say, and not daring to lie to or deceive the turtle, Sanzang was quiet for a long time and gave no reply. When the turtle realized that Sanzang had not asked the questions on his behalf he gave a shake of his head and submerged with a loud splash, dropping the four of them, horse, scriptures and all, into the water.

Oh dear! But luckily the Tang Priest had cast off his mortal body and achieved the Way. If he had still been as he had before he would have sunk to the bottom. It was also lucky that the white horse was a dragon, that Pig and Friar Sand could swim, and that Brother Monkey

gave a smiling and magnificent display of his great magic powers as he lifted the Tang Priest out of the water and up the East bank. The only thing was that the bundles of scriptures, the clothes and the saddle were all soaked.

Master and disciples had climbed up the bank to get themselves sorted out when a sudden fierce wind blew up, the sky turned dark, and amid thunder and lightning stones and sand flew all around. This is what could be Chapter 99

1386

Journey to the West

seen:

A wind

Throwing heaven and earth into chaos;

Thunder

Rocking mountains and rivers;

Lightning

Flying like fire through the clouds;

Mists

Covering all of the earth.

The wind howled;

Loud roared the thunder.

The lightning streaked red,

While clouds blocked out the moon and the stars.

The wind – blown dust drove into the face,

And tigers and leopards hid in terror.

The lightning flashes set birds cawing,

And tress all vanished in the spreading mists.

The wind whipped up the waves of the River of Heaven;

The thunder terrified the fish and dragons in the River of Heaven; The lightning lit up the whole of River of Heaven;

The mists enshrouded in darkness the banks of the River of Heaven.

Splendid wind!

Mountains toppled; pines and bamboo fell.

Splendid thunder!

Its majesty alarmed insects and spread terror.

Chapter 99

1387

Journey to the West

Splendid lightning!

It moved across the sky and lit up the wilds like golden snakes.

Splendid mist!

Darkening the whole of space, obscuring the nine heavens.

This alarmed Sanzang, who pressed down on the bundles of scriptures, while Friar Sand held down their carrying – pole and Pig clung to the white horse. Monkey, however, swung his iron cudgel around with both hands as he kept guard to both right and left.

Now the wind, mist, thunder and lightning were all signals made by evil demons who wanted to steal the scriptures that had been fetched. They tried all night to grab them until the dawn; only then did they stop.

The venerable elder, whose clothes were all soaking wet, shivered and shook as he said, "How did all this start, Wukong?"

"Master," Brother Monkey replied, snorting with fury, "you don't understand the inner truth. By escorting you to fetch these scriptures we have won the great achievement of heaven and earth. You will enjoy perpetual youth, and your dharma body will never decay. This is something heaven and earth can't stand for, and the demons and

gods detest. They wanted to come and steal them in the darkness. But because the scriptures were soaked through and your true dharma body was holding them down, the thunder could not bombard them, the lightning could not illuminate them and the mist could not obscure them. It was also because I whirled my iron cudgel around to make its pure Positive nature protect them. Since dawn the Positive has been in the ascendant again, which is why they can't take them now."

Only then did Sanzang, Pig and Friar Sand realize what had happened and all express unbounded thanks. A little later, when the sun was shining from high in the sky, they took the scriptures to the top of a high cliff, opened the bundles and put them out to dry. The rocks on which the scriptures were dried in the sun remain there to this day. Then they spread their clothes and shoes out to dry beside the cliff while they stood there, sat down, or leapt around. Indeed:

The pure Positive body was happy in the sun,

When Negative demons dared not use their might.

Even when water is dominant the true scriptures will win,

Not fearing wind or thunder, lightning, mist or light.

After this clarification they come to the true perception;

From now on they will reach the immortals' land in peace.

On the rocks where the scriptures were dried their traces still remain;
Chapter 99

1388

Journey to the West

Never again will any demons come back to this place.

As the four of them were checking through the scriptures and drying them in the sun one by one some fishermen who were passing the river bank lifted up their heads and saw them there.

One of the fishermen recognized them and said, "Venerable teachers, didn't you cross this river the other year when you were on your way to the Western Heaven to fetch the scriptures?"

"Yes, yes," said Pig, "that's right. Where are you from? How did you

know who we are?"

"We're from Chen Village," the fisherman replied.

"How far is Chen Village from here?" Pig asked.

"It's seven miles South from this gulch," the fisherman said.

"Let's take the scriptures to Chen Village and dry them there," said Pig. "There's somewhere we can stay there, and we'll be able to get something to eat. Besides, we can get their family to wash our clothes. That'll be best, won't it?"

"We will not go there," said Sanzang. "When we have dried everything here we can pack up and find our way back."

The fishermen, who passed the gulch to the South, happened to meet Chen Cheng. "You two old gentlemen,"

they called, "the teachers who went to be sacrificed instead of your children the other year have come back."

"Where did you see them?" Chen Cheng asked.

"Drying their scriptures in the sun on the rocks," the fishermen replied.

Chen Cheng then took several of his tenants across the gulch, saw the pilgrims, and hurried towards them to kneel and say, "My lords, now that you are coming back with your scriptures, your achievement completed and your deeds done, why don't you come to my house? Why are you hanging around here? Won't you please come straight to the house?"

"We'll go with you when we've dried our scriptures in the sun," Monkey replied.

"How did your scriptures and clothes all get wet, my lords?" Chen Cheng asked.

"The other year the White soft-shelled Turtle kindly carried us West across the river," Sanzang replied, "and this year he carried us across it Eastwards. We were approaching the bank when he put some questions to me about the enquiries he had asked me to make with the Lord Buddha about how long he would live. Now I never made this enquiry, so he soaked us all in the water. That was how they got wet."

Sanzang then told the whole story in all its details, and as Chen Cheng

was so sincere in pressing his invitation Sanzang could do nothing but pack up the scriptures. As it was not realized that the ends of several rolls of the *Buddhacaritakavya sutra* had stuck to the rock when wet, the ends were torn off, which is why the *Buddhacaritakavya sutra* is incomplete to this day and there are still traces of writing on the rocks where the scriptures were dried in the sun.

Chapter 99

1389

Journey to the West

"We were careless," Sanzang said with remorse. "We did not pay enough attention."

"You're wrong," said Monkey with a laugh, "you're wrong. Heaven and earth are incomplete and this scripture used to be complete. Now it's been soaked and torn to fulfil the mystery of incompleteness. This is not something that could have been achieved through human effort." When master and disciples had finished packing the surras they returned with Chen Chang to his village.

In the village one person told ten, ten told a hundred, and a hundred a thousand, till all of them, young and old, came out to welcome and see the pilgrims. As soon as Chen Qing heard of it he had an incense table set out to greet them in front of the gates; he also ordered drummers and players of wind instruments to perform.

A moment later the travelers arrived and were welcomed and taken inside. Chen Qing led out his whole household to greet them with bows and thank them for their earlier kindness in saving their son and daughter.

Tea and a vegetarian meal were then ordered; but since receiving the immortal food and immortal delicacies of the Lord Buddha and casting off his mortal body to become a Buddha, Sanzang had lost all desire for mortals' food. As the two old men's urgings were so insistent, he took some of the food as a mark of gratitude.

The Great Sage Monkey had never been one to eat cooked food, so he said, "That will be enough."

Friar Sand did not eat either, and even Pig was not the Pig he used to be: he soon put his bowl down.

"Aren't you eating any more either, idiot?" Monkey asked.

"I don't know why," Pig said, "but my stomach's gone weak all of a sudden." The vegetarian banquet was then cleared away as the old men asked about how they had fetched the scriptures. Sanzang then gave them a detailed account that started with the bath in the Jade Truth Temple and the lightening of their bodies at Cloud—touching Crossing and went on to tell how they had seen the Tathagata at Thunder Monastery, been feasted at the jeweled tower, given the scriptures in the precious library——wordless scriptures at first because when the two arhats had demanded presents they had refused them——had gone back to pay their respects to the Tathagata again to be given the number of rolls in a single store, had been plunged into the water by the White Soft—shelled Turtle, and nearly had the scriptures stolen in the darkness by evil spirits. After telling all this Sanzang took his leave.

But the whole family of the two old men was not at all willing to let them go. "We have been under a great debt to you for saving our children that we have not yet been able to repay," they said. "We have built a Temple of Deliverance where incense has been burned to you ever since without ceasing." Then they called out the children in whose place Monkey and Pig had gone to be sacrificed, Chen Guan —given and Pan of Gold, to kowtow in thanks and ask them into the shrine to take a look. Sanzang then put the bundles of scriptures in front of the hall of their house and read them one roll of the *Precious Eternity sutra.* Then they went to the temple, where the Chens had set out delicacies. Before the pilgrims could sit down another group of people came to invite them to another meal, and before they could pick up their chopsticks yet another group came with a third invitation. This went on and on without end, so that they had no chance to eat properly. Sanzang, who dared not decline the invitations, had to make gestures of eating. The shrine was indeed most handsomely built:

The gateway was thickly painted in red

Thanks to the generous donors.

A tower rose there

Where houses with a pair of cloisters had now been built.

Red were the doors

And the Seven Treasures were finely carved.

Incense floated up to the clouds;

Pure light filled the vault of space.

Some tender cypress saplings were still being watered;

A number of pine trees did not yet form a grove.

Living waters met one in front

Where the waves of the River of Heaven were rolling;

High cliffs rose behind

Where range upon range of mountains joined the earth dragon.

When Sanzang has seen everything he climbed the high tower, where statues of the four pilgrims had been placed. "Looks just like you, brother," said pig, tugging at Monkey, when he saw them.

"Second brother," said Friar Sand, "Your statue's just like you too. The only thing is that the master's is too good—looking."

"It is very good," said Sanzang, "it is very good." They then came downstairs, where people were still waiting, and urged them to eat the vegetarian food that was set out in the hall and in the cloisters behind it.

"What happened to the Great King's Temple that used to be here?" Brother Monkey asked.

"It was demolished that year," the old men replied. "My lords, we have had good harvests every year since this monastery was established, thanks to your lordships' blessed protection."

"That was heaven's gift," said Monkey with a smile, "nothing to do with us. But after we have gone this time I guarantee that the families in your village will have many sons and grandsons, flourishing livestock, wind and rain at the right time year in and year out, and rain and wind year out and year in at the right time." The people all kowtowed in thanks.

What could then be seen were a countless number of people lined up behind each other to offer fruit and other vegetarian food. "I'll be blowed," said Pig with a laugh. "In the old days, when I could eat, nobody ever asked me to do so ten times over. But now, when I can't, one family won't wait for another to finish before offering me food."

Although he was feeling full he did get going a little and ate eight or nine meatless dishes; and despite having an injured stomach he also downed twenty or thirty steamed breadrolls. When they were all full, more people came with further invitations. "Grateful though I am for your great affection," Sanzang said, "I do not deserve Chapter 99

it. I hope that we may be allowed to rest tonight. Tomorrow morning we will accept some more."

It was now late at night. Sanzang, who was guarding the true scriptures and would not leave them for a moment, sat in meditation at the foot of the tower to keep a vigil. As the third watch of the night approached he said quietly, "Wukong, the people here know that we have found the Way and completed our undertaking.

As the old saying goes, 'The true adept does not show his face; who shows his face is no true adept.' I am afraid that if we tarry too long here that we may fail in our main enterprise."

"What you say is right, Master," Monkey replied. "Let's slip quietly away in the middle of the night while they're all sound asleep." Pig too understood, Friar Sand comprehended very clearly, and the white horse also knew what he meant. So they got up, quietly loaded the packs, shouldered the poles, and carried the things out along the cloister. When they reached the main gates and found them locked Monkey used unlocking magic to open the inner gates and the main gates. They followed the path East, only to hear the Eight Vajrapanis calling from mid–air. "Come with us, escapers." The venerable elder then smelt incense as he rose up into the air.

This was indeed a case of:

When the elixir is formed one sees the original face;

When the body is strong one can then visit one's sovereign.

If you do not know how he saw the Tang emperor, listen to the explanation in the next installment.

Chapter 100

The Journey Back to the East Is Made

The Five Immortals Achieve Nirvana

We will tell not of how the four travelers escaped and rose on the wind with the vajrapanis, but of the many people in the Temple of Deliverance in Chen Village. After they rose at dawn to prepare more fruit and delicacies to offer they came to the ground floor of the tower and found the Tang Priest gone. Some asked questions and others searched. They were all thrown into panic and did not know what to do.

"We've let those living Buddhas all get clean away," they lamented as their howls rose to the skies. As there was nothing else they could do about it they carried all the food they had prepared to the ground floor of the tower as offerings and burned imitation paper money. From then on four major sacrifices and twenty – four minor sacrifices were held every year. In addition people praying for cures or safety, seeking marriages, making vows, and seeking wealth or sons came at every hour of every day to bum incense and make offerings. Indeed:

Incense smoked in the golden burner for a thousand years;

The light burned in the lamps of jade through eternity.

We will say no more of this, but tell of how the Eight Vajrapanis used a second fragrant wind to carry the four pilgrims off again. Some days later they reached the East, and Chang'an came gradually into view. Now after seeing the Tang Priest off from the city on the twelfth day of the ninth month in the thirteenth year of *Then Guan* the Emperor Taizong had in the sixteenth year sent officials of his Department of Works to build a Watching For the Scriptures Tower outside the city of Chang'an to receive the scriptures. Here Taizong went in person every year. It so happened that on the very day the emperor went to the tower the Western sky was filled with auspicious light and gusts of

scented wind.

"Holy monk," the vajrapanis said, stopping in mid air, "this is the city of Chang'an. We cannot come down as the people here are too clever: we are afraid that they might give away what we look like. The Great Sage Monkey and the other two gentlemen cannot go there either. You must go there yourself to hand the scriptures to your monarch then come back here. We will be waiting for you up in the clouds ready to go to report back on your mission."

"Although what you respected gentlemen say is right," replied the Great Sage, "how could my master possibly shoulder the pole for carrying the scriptures? And how could he lead this horse? We'll have to take him there.

May I trouble you to wait a moment up in the air? We wouldn't dare keep you waiting."

"The other day the Bodhisattva Guanyin informed the Tathagata," the vajrapanis replied, "that the return journey would take only eight days, so as to make up the number of rolls of scriptures in the Tripitaka. We have already spent over four days, and we are worried that Pig will be so greedy for blessings and honors that he will make us overrun the time limit."

"The master's a Buddha now," Pig replied with a smile, "and I want to become one too. So why should I want to be greedy? Cheeky great fools! Wait here while we hand the scriptures over, then we'll come back to return with you." The idiot then shouldered a pole while Friar Sand held the horse and Brother Monkey led the holy monk as they brought their cloud down to land beside the Watching For the Scriptures Tower.

When Taizong and his officials all saw this they came down to greet the travelers with the words, "You are back, Imperial Younger Brother."

The Tang Priest fell to the ground in a kowtow, only to be helped back to his feet by Taizong, who asked,

"Who are these three?"

"They are disciples I took on along the way," Sanzang replied. Taizong was delighted.

"Harness the horses to our imperial carriage," he ordered his aides,

"and invite the Imperial Younger Brother to mount his steed and return to the palace with us." The Tang Priest thanked him and mounted his horse. The Great Sage followed closely behind, whirling his golden cudgel. Pig and Friar Sand led the horse and shouldered the pole as they followed the emperor back to Chang'an. Indeed: In that year of peace and rising prosperity

Civil and military officials are calm and magnificent.

At a land and water mass the clergy displayed the dharma;

Chapter 100

1393

Journey to the West

The monarch commands his ministers in the throne hall of the palace.

A passport was given to Tang Sanzang;

The primal cause of the scriptures has been matched to the Five Elements.

Through painful tempering all monsters have been destroyed;

Now he returns in triumph to the capital.

The Tang Priest and his three disciples followed the imperial carriage back to the palace. Everybody in the capital knew that the pilgrim who had gone to fetch the scriptures had now returned.

When the monks, young and old, of the Hongfu Monastery in Chang'an where the Tang Priest used to live saw that the tops of a number of pine trees were all leaning towards the East they exclaimed in astonishment,

"Odd, very odd! There's been no wind today, so why are the tops of these trees all bent?"

"Fetch our vestments at once," said one of them who was a former disciple of Sanzang. "The master who went to fetch the scriptures is back."

"How do you know?" the other monks all asked.

"When the master left many years ago," the former disciple replied,

"he said that when the branches and tops of the pines turned East three, four, six or seven years after he had gone he would be back. My master speaks with the holy voice of a Buddha: that is how I know." They quickly put on their habits and went out.

By the time they reached the Western street, messengers had arrived to say, "The pilgrim who went for the scriptures has just returned, and His Majesty is bringing him into the city." As soon as they heard this the monks all hurried over to meet him. When they saw the imperial carriage they dared not come close, but followed it to the palace gates, where the Tang Priest dismounted and went inside with his disciples.

The Tang Priest stood at the foot of the steps to the throne hall with the dragon horse, the load of sutras, Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand. Emperor Taizong then summoned the Younger Brother to enter the throne hall and invited him to sit down, which the Tang Priest did with thanks. He then had the scriptures carried up.

Monkey and the others unpacked the scrolls, which the officials in personal attendance handed to the emperor.

"How many scriptures are there?" the emperor asked. "And how did you fetch them?"

"When your clerical subject reached Vulture Peak and saw the Lord Buddha," Sanzang replied, "he told the arhats Ananda and Kasyapa to take us first to a precious tower where we were given meatless food, then to the library, where we were handed the scriptures. The arhats demanded presents, but as we had not brought any we had none to give. Then they gave us the scriptures. When we had thanked the Buddha for his goodness and were travelling East the scriptures were snatched away by a demonic gale. Luckily my disciples were able to recover them by using magic powers, but they had been blown all over the place. On opening them out to look at them we found that they were all blank, wordless versions. We were so shocked that we went back to report to the Buddha and plead for the real ones. What the Lord Buddha said was, 'When these scriptures were composed, bhiksus and holy monks went down the mountain and recited them to the family of the elder Zhao Chapter 100

in the land of Sravasti. This ensured peace and safety for the living and deliverance for the dead members of the family. All that was

asked for was three bushels and three pecks of granular gold. I thought that they sold the scriptures too cheap, so I saw to it that Zhao's sons and grandsons would be poor.' When we realized that the two arhats were demanding a present and that the Lord Buddha knew all about it we had no choice but to give them our begging bowl of purple gold. Only then did they hand over the true scriptures with words.

There are thirty–five of them, and a number of rolls from each of them was selected to be given us, making a total of rolls. This corresponds to the number of rolls in a single Store."

At this Taizong was more delighted than ever. "Let the Protocol Office arrange a thanksgiving banquet in the Eastern hall," he ordered, at which he suddenly saw the three disciples standing at the foot of the steps, looking very strange indeed. "Are your distinguished disciples foreigners?" he asked.

"My senior disciple's surname is Sun," the venerable elder replied with a bow, "his Buddhist name is Wukong, and I also call him Sun the Novice. He originally came from the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in the country of Aolai in the Eastern Continent of Divine Body. For making great havoc in the palaces of heaven five hundred years ago he was crashed by the Lord Buddha in a stone cell in the Double Boundary Mountain on the Western frontier. After the Bodhisattva Guanyin persuaded him to mend his ways he accepted conversion, so when I arrived there I delivered him. I am greatly indebted to him for my protection. My second disciple Zhu has the Buddhist name Wuneng, and I also call him Pig. He came from the Cloud Pathway Cave on the Mountain of Blessing, and was a monster in Gao Village in the land of Stubet until he was converted by the Bodhisattva and subdued by Wukong. He has made great efforts, carrying the load all along the way, and been very useful in crossing rivers. My third disciple's surname is Sha and his Buddhist name Wujing. He used to be a monster in the Rowing Sands River. He too was converted by the Bodhisattva and now believes in the Buddhist faith. The horse is not the one that my sovereign gave me."

"How is that?" Taizong asked. "Its markings are the same."

"When your subject was going to cross the waters of the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge by Coiled Snake Mountain my original horse was devoured by this one," Sanzang replied. "Sun the Novice obliged me by having the Bodhisattva asked about the horse's background. It was originally the son of the Dragon King of the Western Sea who had

been sent there because of an offence. He too, was saved by the Bodhisattva, who told him to work for me and turned him into a horse with the same markings as the original one. He has been very helpful in climbing mountains, crossing ridges, fording rivers and negotiating difficult country. On the outward journey I rode him, and he carried the scriptures on the way back: I have depended greatly on his efforts."

Taizong was full of boundless praise on learning this. "How long in fact was your journey to the far West?" he asked.

"I remember the Bodhisattva saying that it was 36,000 miles," Sanzang replied, "but I kept no record of the distances along the way. All I know is that we experienced fourteen winters and summers. Every day there was a mountain or a ridge. The woods were big and the rivers wide. I also met several kings who inspected and stamped my passport. Disciples," he ordered, "fetch the passport and hand it to His Majesty."

When Taizong examined it he saw that it had been issued on the twelfth day of the ninth month of the thirteenth year of *Zhen Guan.* "You did indeed make a long and protracted journey," he observed with a touch of a smile. "It is now the twenty – seventh year of *Zhen Guan."* On the passport were the seals of the monarchs of Elephantia, Wuji, Tarrycart, the Womanland of Western Liang, Jisai, Purpuria, Leonia, Bhiksuland and Dharmadestructia; as well as the seals of the chief officials of Fengxian, Yuhua and Jinping. When Taizong had read through the passport he put it away.

Soon the officials in personal attendance on the emperor came to invite them to go to the banquet, whereupon Taizong led Sanzang by the hand out of the throne hall, asking, "Do your distinguished disciples know how to behave themselves?"

"My disciples were all demons from mountain villages and from the wilderness," Sanzang replied, "so they do not understand the etiquette of the sacred court of China. I beg you to forgive them for any offences, Your Majesty."

"We won't blame them," Taizong said with a smile, "we won't blame

them. They are all invited to come with us to the banquet in the Eastern pavilion." Thanking him once again, Sanzang called his three disciples, and they all went to the Eastern pavilion to look. This was indeed the great land of China, no ordinary place. Just look;

Coloured silks hung from the gates,

Red carpets were spread on the floor.

Heavy, rare fragrances,

Fresh and exotic foods.

Amber cups,

Glazed dishes,

Set with gold and nephrite;

Plates of yellow gold,

White jade bowls,

Inlaid with patterns.

Tender braised turnips,

Sugar – dredged taros,

Wonderful sweet mushrooms,

Fine fresh seaweed,

Several servings of bamboo shoots with ginger,

A number of rounds of mallows with honey,

Wheat gluten with leaves of the tree of heaven,

Tree fungus and thin strips of beancurd,

Agar and aster,

Noodles with ferns and dried rose – petals,

Peppers stewed with radish,

Melon shredded with mustard.

The dishes of vegetables were fine enough,

But the rare and wonderful fruit was outstanding:

Walnuts and persimmon cakes,

Longans and lichees,

Chestnuts from Xuanzhou and Shandong jujubes,

Gingko fruit from South of the Yangtse and hare – head pears,

Hazelnuts, pine nuts and lotus seeds, all big as grapes,

Torreya nuts and melon seeds the size of water chestnuts,

Olives and wild apples,

Pippins and crabs,

Lotus root and arrowhead,

Crisp plums and red baybfenies.

Nothing was missing,

All was complete.

There were steamed honey pastries and other confections,

Best wines and fragrant tea and things out of the ordinary.

Words could not describe the countless delicacies:

The great land of China was not Western barbary.

The master and his three disciples, together with the civil and military officials, stood to left and right as Emperor Taizong took his seat in the middle. There was singing, dancing and instrumental music, and all was ordered and solemn as the celebration lasted for the rest of the day. Indeed: Chapter 100

The monarch's banquet was finer than those of ancient Tang and Yu;
Great was the blessing of the true scriptures obtained.

This was a story to be told with glory for ever:

The light of the Buddha shines throughout the imperial capital.

That evening they thanked the emperor for his kindness, after which Taizong returned to the living quarters of the palace and the officials went home. The Tang Priest went back with his followers to the Hongfu Monastery, where the monks welcomed his with kowtows.

No sooner had he gone in through the gates than the monks reported, "Master, these tree－tops all suddenly leaned East this morning. As we remembered what you had said we went out of the city to meet you, and you had indeed come." Overcome with delight, the venerable elder then entered the abbot's lodgings. This time Pig neither shouted for tea and food nor made a row. Brother Monkey and Friar Sand also both behaved well.

As the achievement was now complete they were naturally peaceful. At nightfall they went to bed.

Early the next morning Taizong announced to his officials at his dawn audience, "When we thought of the most profound and great achievement of our Younger Brother that we have no way of rewarding we were unable to sleep all night. We managed to draft a few colloquial sentences with which to express our thanks, but could not write them out. Officials of the Secretariat," he ordered, "write them all down while we recite them to you." This is the text he dictated:

It is known that Heaven and Earth have their forms as a demonstration of how they provide the cover and support in which life is contained, whereas the four seasons are invisible, hiding the cold and heat with which they transform all creatures. Thus it is that by examining Heaven and looking at the Earth even the stupid can know about their origins, but few are the wise who can exhaust the numbers of the Negative and the Positive.

Heaven and Earth, which are enveloped by the Negative and Positive, are easily understood because of their images, but the Negative and

Positive are hard to fathom because they are formless. If images are clear and can be grasped even the stupid will not be confused; if forms are hidden and invisible even the wise will be at a loss.

The way of the Buddha honors emptiness, rides on the mystery and controls silence, yet saves all beings and dominates all regions. When it raises up the numinous there is nothing higher; when it represses its own divine strength there is nothing lower. When it is big it extends throughout the cosmos; when tiny it can be contained in a fraction of an inch. It does not die and it is not born; it endures a thousand aeons and is eternal.

Half hidden and half manifest, it controls all blessings and makes them exist for ever. Mysterious is the wonderful Way; none of those who follow it know its limits. Silent is the flow of the Dharma: of those who grasp it none finds its source. So how can mortal fools in their stupidity follow it without doubts or delusion?

The great teaching arose in the West. Later a wondrous dream came to the Han court, spreading its brilliance and charity to the East. In ancient times, when the Buddha's forms and traces were shared around, they converted people before word could be spread abroad. In the age when they were sometimes visible and sometimes invisible, the people looked up to them and followed them. But later the image was obscures and nirvana was reached, it moved away and left the world, the golden countenance was hidden away and no longer radiated its brilliance in the three thousand worlds. Pictures of the lovely image were made, vainly Chapter 100

trying to show the Buddha's thirty – two holy marks. Thereafter his subtle words were widely propagated, rescuing birds on the three roads of life; the teachings he left behind were spread afar, guiding all living beings along the ten stages of development. The Buddha has scriptures that can be divided into the Greater and Lesser Vehicles. There is also magic, the art of spreading mistakes and making right into wrong.

Now our priest Xuanzang, the Master of the Law, is the leader of the Dharma faith. In his youth he was so careful and perceptive that he soon became aware of the value of the three voids. As he grew up the clarity of his spirit embraced the four kinds of patience in his conduct.

Not even a pine tree in a wind or the moon reflected in water could be compared with his purity; immortals' dew and bright pearls are no match for his lustrous splendor. His wisdom encompasses all without encumbrance; his spirit fathoms the formless. Rising far above the six impurities, he extends his fragrance through a thousand ages. When he concentrated his mind on the inner sphere he grieved at the torments suffered by the true Dharma; when he settled his thoughts on the gate of mystery he was distressed by the distortion of the profound writings. He longed to put them back into order so that the teachings of the past could be propagated again; and to root out apocryphal texts, enabling the true ones to stay in circulation so as to open the way for later scholars. That is why he lifted up his heart towards the Pure Land, and made a Dharma journey to the West, braving the dangers of distant lands as he walked alone, trusting to his staff. When the snow whirled around at dawn the land would disappear in a moment; and when the dust started to fly at evening the sky was blotted out. He advanced through the mists across a thousand leagues of mountains and rivers, making his way forward through the frosts and rains of a hundred changes of season. With great single－mindedness and making light of his efforts he longed deeply to reach his goal. He wandered around the West for fourteen years, visiting every one of those exotic countries in his search for the true teaching. He visited the Twin Trees and the Eight Rivers, savoring the Way and braving the wind. In Deer Park and on Vulture Peak he gazed upon wonders and marvels. He received the good word from ancient sages and the true teaching from superior worthies, probing deep within the wonderful gates, and exhausting the mysteries. The Way of the Three Vehicles and the Six Disciplines gallop across the field of his heart; a hundred cases of texts belonging to one Store roll like waves in the sea of his eloquence. Infinitely many are the countries he has visited; and vast the number of the scriptures he has collected.

He has obtained 5,048 rolls of all thirty－five of the essential texts of the Great Vehicle to be translated and made known in China so that the wonderful cause may be promoted. The clouds of mercy he has drawn from the far West will shed their Dharma rain here in the East. The holy teachings that had been incomplete are now complete once more; the common folk who had sinned are brought back to blessings. The searing flames of fire have been damped down, and all have been saved from the ways of delusion; the muddied waves in the water of wisdom have been made clear once more as all gather on the other bank. From this it can be learned that the evil fall because of their karma, while the good rise because of their destiny. The origins of

these rises and falls lie in one's own actions. This can be compared with a cassia growing on a high mountain, where only clouds and dew can nourish its blossom, or a lotus emerging from green waters, its leaves unsullied by flying dust. It is not that the lotus is pure by nature and the cassia unsullied: they are good because one attaches itself to what is lofty, where mean and trivial things cannot encumber it, while the other depends on what is clean, where filth cannot dirty it. Now if plants that know nothing can become good by building themselves up through goodness, how much the more so should conscientious people achieve blessing through blessed cause and effect. It is now to be hoped that the true scriptures will be propagated as endlessly as the alternation of sun and moon; and that this blessing will extend for ever, eternal like heaven and earth.

As soon as this had been written out the holy monk, who was waiting outside the palace gates to express his thanks, was summoned. The moment he heard the summons, Sanzang hurried and performed the ritual of kowtows. Taizong then invited him into the throne room and handed him the document, Sanzang read it through, prostrated himself once more in thanks, and submitted this memorial: "Your Majesty's writing is both lofty and in the ancient style; it is reasoned, profound and subtle. But I do not know what its title is."

"What we drafted orally last night," Taizong replied, "We would call a 'Preface to the Holy Teaching'. Would that be acceptable?" The venerable elder kowtowed and expressed his thanks at great length.

Taizong then said, "Our talent makes us ashamed by comparison with what is recorded on jade tablets; our words are not worthy of what is inscribed on metal or stone. As for the Inner Scriptures, we are even more ignorant of them. The text we drafted orally is truly a base and clumsy composition that sullies golden tablets with brush and ink, and is like placing pebbles in a forest of pearls. When we reflect on it we are filled with embarrassment. It is most unworthy of merit; we have put you to the trouble of thanking us for nothing."

The officials all expressed their congratulations and kowtowed before the imperial text on the holy teaching, which was going to be published everywhere in the capital and the provinces.

"Would you be willing to recite some of the true scriptures for us, Younger Brother?" Taizong asked.

"Your Majesty," Sanzang replied, "if true scriptures are to be recited it must be done in the Buddha's ground.

A throne hall is no place for the recital of scriptures."

Taizong was most pleased to accept this. "Which is the purest monastery in the city of Chang'an?" he asked his officers it attendance, at which the Academician Xiao Yu slipped forward from his rank to memorialize,

"The Monastery of the Wild Goose Stupa in the city is the purest of them all."

Taizong then ordered his officials, "Each of you is reverently to bring a few rolls of the true scriptures and accompany us to the Monastery of the Wild Goose Stupa, where we shall invite our younger brother to preach on the scriptures." The officials, all carrying some rolls of the scriptures, went with Taizong to the monastery, where a high platform was erected and everything was neatly set out.

"Pig, Friar Sand," the venerable elder commanded, "bring the dragon horse with you and put the luggage in order. Monkey will stay beside me." He then addressed the emperor, saying, "If Your Majesty wishes to spread the true scriptures throughout the world copies must be made before they can be published. The original texts must be stored as great treasures. They may not be shown any disrespect or be defiled."

"Younger Brother," replied Taizong with a smile, "what you say is very correct, very correct." He then ordered the officials of the Hanlin Academy and the Palace Secretariat to copy out the true scriptures and had another monastery, the Copying Monastery, founded to the East of the city wall.

The venerable elder mounted the platform with several scriptures in his hands. He was just about to begin reciting them when scented breezes began to waft around and the Eight Great Vajrapanis appeared in mid–air to shout aloud, "Scripture–reciter, put those scriptures down and come back to the West with us." Monkey and the other two, who were standing below Sanzang, all rose up above the ground together with the white horse.

Sanzang put the scriptures down and also rose up to the ninth level of

clouds, then went away with them through the air. Taizong and his officials were all so alarmed that they kowtowed to the sky. This was indeed a case of

The holy monk long strove to fetch the scriptures;

For fourteen years across the West he strayed.

He journeyed hard and met with much disaster;

Chapter 100

1400

Journey to the West

By mountains and by rivers long delayed.

Completing eight times nine and one nine more,

His deeds filled worlds in numbers beyond measure.

He went back to his country taking sutras

That people in the East will always treasure.

When Taizong and all the officials had finished worshipping, eminent monks were selected to prepare a great Land and Sea Mass in the Monastery of the Wild Goose Stupa at which the true scriptures of the Great Store would be recited, and by which all evil—doing ghosts in the underworld would be saved, and goodness would spread all around. We will not describe how copies were made of the scriptures and published throughout the empire.

The story tells instead how the Eight Vajrapanis led the venerable elder, his three disciples and the horse, all five of them back to Vulture Peak. The journey to Chang'an and back had taken eight days. Just when all the deities of Vulture Peak were listening to the Buddha preaching, the Eight Vajrapanis led master and disciples in.

"In obedience to the golden command," they reported to the Tathagata, "your disciples have carried the holy monks back to the land of Tang, where they handed the scriptures over. We have now come to report our mission completed." The Tang Priest and his disciples were then told to step forward and be given their jobs.

"Holy Monk," the Tathagata said, "in an earlier life you were my

second disciple, and called Master Golden Cicada. But because you would not listen to my sermon on the Dharma and had no respect for my great teaching I demoted your soul to be reborn in the East. Now, happily, you have come over to the faith and rely on our support; and in following our teaching your achievement in fetching the true scriptures has been very great. Your reward will be to be promoted to high office as the Candana – punya Buddha. Sun Wukong, when you made great havoc in the palaces of heaven I had to use powerful magic to crush you under the Five Elements Mountain until, happily, your heaven – sent punishment was completed and you were converted to the Sakyamuni's faith. It was also fortunate that you suppressed your evil side and gave play to your good side as you won glory by defeating monsters and demons along the journey. All that was begun has now been completed and you too will be rewarded with high office as the Victorious Fighting Buddha. Zhu Wuneng; you used to be a water god in the River of Heaven as Marshal Tian Peng. Because of your drunken flirtation with an immortal maiden at the Peach Banquet you were sent down to be born in the lower world as a beast.

From your love of the human body you sinned in the Cloud Pathway Cave on the Mount of Blessing before your conversion to the great faith and entry into our Buddhist sect. You guarded the holy monk on his journey, but your heart is still unregenerate, and you are not yet purged of your lust. But as you won merit by carrying the luggage you will be rewarded with promotion as the Altar Cleanser."

"They've both been made Buddhas," Pig shouted, "so why am I only the Altar Cleanser?"

"Because you have a voracious appetite, a lazy body and a huge belly," the Tathagata replied. "Now very many people in the world's four continents believe in our teachings. I will ask you to clean up the altars after all Buddhist services: your post is of a rank that provides plenty to eat. What is wrong with that?"

Chapter 100

1401

Journey to the West

"Sha Wujing, you used to be the Curtain – lifting General until you were banished to the lower world for smashing a crystal bowl at a Peach Banquet. You fell into the River of Flowing Sands where you

sinned by killing and eating people, until, thank goodness, you were converted to our teaching, sincerely relied on our support, and won merit by protecting the holy monk and leading the horse up the mountain. Your reward will be elevation to high office as the Golden Arhat."

Then he said to the white horse. "You were originally the son of Guangjin, the Dragon King of the Western Ocean. Because you disobeyed your father you were punished for being unfilial until you too were converted to the Dharma and to our faith. Every day you carried the holy monk to the West, and after that you carried the holy scriptures back to the East. For these achievements you will be rewarded by being made a Heavenly Dragon of the Eight Classes of Being."

The venerable elder and his three disciples all kowtowed to express their thanks, and the horse showed its gratitude too. A protector was then ordered to take the horse straight down to the Dragon-transforming Pool by the precipice at the back of Vulture Peak and push him into the pool. At once the horse stretched itself out, shed all its hair, and acquired horns. Golden scales grew all over its body and a silver beard sprouted on its cheeks and chin. Then, shining all over with auspicious aura and with clouds of good omen in every claw, it flew up from the Dragon-transforming Pool to coil itself around the Heaven-supporting Winged Column. All the Buddhas expressed their admiration for the Tathagata's great magic.

"Master," Monkey said to the Tang Priest, "now that I've become a Buddha just like you, surely I don't have to go on wearing this golden band. Do you plan to say any more Band-tightening Spells to tighten it round my head? Say a Band-loosening Spell as quickly as you can, take it off, and smash it to smithereens. Don't let that Bodhisattva or whatever she is make life miserable for anyone else with it."

"It was because you were so uncontrollable in those days that this magic was needed to keep you in order."

Sanzang replied. "Now that you are a Buddha it can of course go. There is no reason for it to stay on your head any longer. Feel there now." When Monkey raised his hands to feel he found that it had indeed gone.

The Candana-punya Buddha, the Victorious Fighting Buddha, the Altar Cleanser and the Golden Arhat had all completed the true achievement and reached their proper places. The heavenly dragon

horse had also come back to its true self. There is a poem to prove this that goes: All of reality turns to dust;

When the four appearances combine the body is renewed.

The substance of the Five Elements is all void;

Forget about the passing fame of fiends.

With Candana—punya comes the great awakening;

When duties are completed they escape from suffering.

Great is the blessing of scriptures spread abroad;

Within the only gate five sages dwell on high.

Chapter 100

1402

Journey to the West

When the five holy ones had taken their places all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, holy monks, arhats, protectors, bhiksus, lay people, deities and immortals from every cave and every mountain, great gods, Ding and Jia gods, duty gods, guardians, local deities, and all teachers and immortals who had achieved the Way——all of whom had originally come to hear the preaching——resumed their own places. Just look at it: The coloured mists surround the Vulture Peak;

Auspicious clouds are massed in the world of bliss.

Golden dragons lie at peace,

Jade tigers all are quiet.

Black hares come and go at will;

Tortoises and snakes coil all around.

Phoenixes red and green are in high spirits;

Happy the dark apes and white deer.

Throughout the year amazing flowers bloom;

Immortal fruit grows in all four seasons.

Lofty pine and ancient juniper,

Blue – green cypress and slender bamboo.

Plums of every color, in blossom or in fruit,

Eternal peaches, sometimes ripe and sometimes new.

A thousand kinds of fruit and flower vie in beauty;

All of the sky is filled with auspicious mists.

They all put their hands together in front of their chests in salutation and recited together:

"Homage to the ancient Dipamkara Buddha.

Homage to Bhaisajya – guru – vaiduryaprabhasa Buddha.

Homage to Sakyamuni Buddha.

Homage to the Buddhas of Past, Present and Future.

Homage to the Pure and Happy Buddha.

Homage to Vairocana Buddha.

Homage to Ramadhvaja – raja Buddha.

Homage to Maitreya Buddha.

Homage to Amitabha Buddha.

Homage to Amitayus Buddha.

Homage to Buddha Who Leads to the Truth.

Homage to the Imperishable Vajra Buddha.

Homage to Ratnaprabhasa Buddha.

Homage to the Nagaraja Buddha.

Homage to the Buddha of Zealous Goodness.

Homage to the Precious Moonlight Buddha.

Homage to the Buddha Free of Stupidity.

Homage to Varuna Buddha.

Homage to Narayana Buddha.

Homage to Punyapuspa Buddha.

Homage to the Buddha of Meritorious Talent.

Homage to the Good Wandering Buddha.

Homage to the Illustrious Candana – punya Buddha

Homage to the Manidhvaja Buddha.

Homage to the Buddha of the Torch of Wisdom.

Homage to the Buddha of Great Virtues.

Homage to the Brilliant Buddha of Great Compassion.

Homage to the Maitribala – raja Buddha.

Homage to the Wise and Good Leader Buddha.

Homage to the Vyuharaja Buddha.

Homage to the Buddha of Golden Splendor.

Chapter 100

1404

Journey to the West

Homage to the Buddha of Brilliant Talent

Homage to the Buddha of Wisdom.

Homage to the Buddha of the World's Calm Light.

Homage to the Sunlight and Moonlight Buddha.

Homage to the Sunlight and Moonlight Pearl Buddha.

Homage to the Supreme Buddha King of the Banner of Wisdom.

Homage to the Sughosa Buddha.

Homage to the Buddha of the Banner of Unceasing Radiance.

Homage to the Buddha of the World – watching Lamp.

Homage to the Supreme Dhanna King Buddha.

Homage to the Buddha of Sumeru Light.

Homage to the Buddha Prajnabala King.

Homage to the Brilliant Buddha of the Golden sea.

Homage to the Buddha of Universal Light.

Homage to the Buddha of Illustrious Talent.

Homage to Candana – punya Achievement Buddha.

Homage to the Victorious Fighting Buddha.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Guanyin.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Mahasthama.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Manjusri

Homage to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

Homage to the Bodhisattvas of the Ocean of Purity.

Homage to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Lotus Pool Assembly.

Homage to all the Bodhisattvas of the Utterly Blissful Western Heaven.

Homage to the Three Thousand Protector Bodhisattvas.

Homage to the Five Hundred Arhat Bodhisattvas.

Chapter 100

Homage to the Bhiksu, Bhiksuni, Upasaka and Upasaka Bodhisattvas.

Homage to the Bodhisattvas of the Boundless Dharma.

Homage to the Holy Vajra Bodhisattvas.

Homage to the Altar – cleansing Bodhisattva.

Homage to the Golden Arhat Bodhisattva of the Eight Treasures.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Heavenly Dragon of Eight Classes of Being.

Thus it is that all the Buddhas of every world

Are willing with this achievement

To adorn the Pure Land of the Buddha.

Above we can repay the fourfold kindness,

Below we save those suffering in the three paths of life.

Let anyone who sees or hears

Cherish the enlightened mind.

May all be reborn in the Land of Bliss,

To end this present life of retribution.

All the Buddhas of Past, Present and Future in the Ten Regions, all the Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas, Maha – prajnaparamita."

Here ends the *Journey to the West.*

Chapter 100

Document Outline

- Table of Contents
- Journey to the West
  - Wu Cheng-en
  - Chapter 1
  - Chapter 2
  - Chapter 3
  - Chapter 4
  - Chapter 5
  - Chapter 6
  - Chapter 7
  - Chapter 8
  - Chapter 9
  - Chapter 10
  - Chapter 11
  - Chapter 12
  - Chapter 13
  - Chapter 14
  - Chapter 15
  - Chapter 16
  - Chapter 17
  - Chapter 18
  - Chapter 19
  - Chapter 20
  - Chapter 21
  - Chapter 22
  - Chapter 23
  - Chapter 24
  - Chapter 25
  - Chapter 26
  - Chapter 27
  - Chapter 28
  - Chapter 29
  - Chapter 30
  - Chapter 31
  - Chapter 32
  - Chapter 33
  - Chapter 34
  - Chapter 35
  - Chapter 36
  - Chapter 37

- Chapter 38
- Chapter 39
- Chapter 40
- Chapter 41
- Chapter 42
- Chapter 43
- Chapter 44
- Chapter 45
- Chapter 46
- Chapter 47
- Chapter 48
- Chapter 49
- Chapter 50
- Chapter 51
- Chapter 52
- Chapter 53
- Chapter 54
- Chapter 55
- Chapter 56
- Chapter 57
- Chapter 58
- Chapter 59
- Chapter 60
- Chapter 61
- Chapter 62
- Chapter 63
- Chapter 64
- Chapter 65
- Chapter 66
- Chapter 67
- Chapter 68
- Chapter 69
- Chapter 70
- Chapter 71
- Chapter 72
- Chapter 73
- Chapter 74
- Chapter 75
- Chapter 76
- Chapter 77
- Chapter 78
- Chapter 79
- Chapter 80
- Chapter 81

- Chapter 82
- Chapter 83
- Chapter 84
- Chapter 85
- Chapter 86
- Chapter 87
- Chapter 88
- Chapter 89
- Chapter 90
- Chapter 91
- Chapter 92
- Chapter 93
- Chapter 94
- Chapter 95
- Chapter 96
- Chapter 97
- Chapter 98
- Chapter 99
- Chapter 100